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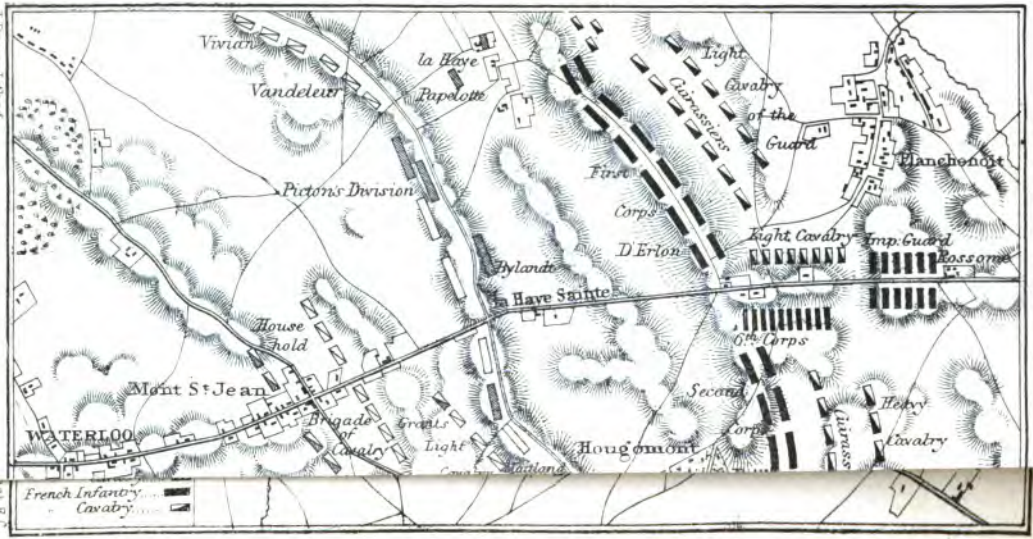
THE TWELVE GREAT BATTLES OF ENGLAND.

BATTLE OF WATERLOO. XI.

This Plan is so placed as to present the Field as it appears to a Visitor approaching by the Brussels Road. If the usual geographical position be preferred the Plan can be reversed by the binder without inconvenience



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THE

TWELVE GREAT BATTLES OF ENGLAND.

INSCRIBED TO THE BRITISH RIFLE VOLUNTEERS OF 1860.

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PREFACE.

An eminent living writer,* in a volume published just ten years since, gave us the following clear-sighted warning:—

"The nation has been rocked to sleep with the comfortable assurance, that there will never be any more war.

"Would to God it were so! But human nature, and human passions and depravity, are ever the same. The men who, despising the authentic and unvarying record of three thousand years, legislate on the assumption that human nature is changed, and that there will now at last be no more war, are like those who build villas and towns on the slopes of Etna and Vesuvius. Thirty or forty years of treacherous silence and serenity have obliterated the recollection and the dread of the subterraneous thunder, the mid-day darkness, and the glowing lava and cinders. . . . . .

"How many times, of late years, have we been on the very brink of war! It is in vain that we are bound (as

* Mr. Justice Byles, in his popular work on the Principles of Trade and Commerce. Eighth edition, chap. xxxi.

Lord Brougham says) in heavy recognizances to keep the peace. It is in vain that this once high-spirited nation has tamely submitted to demands and slights which Lord Chatham would not have brooked for an instant. A reduction of our armaments does but increase the danger of war; by emboldening those, who, with the envy and jealousy natural to mankind, are perpetually watching for an opportunity to humble us. . . .

"No degree of foresight, wisdom, or care, on our part, can preserve us from the contingency of war. Our solemn obligations, our national honour, must at all events be preserved. With nations, as with individuals, where honour is in question, interest is not to be heard. But our true, solid, and well-understood interest speaks the same language. The certain consequences of disregarding national honour is a struggle a little procrastinated, but at greater disadvantage when it does come; —a struggle, not with the help of allies, for they will have been deserted and disgusted, but alone and single-handed;—a struggle, not for victory, but for existence.

"Ours is not the only period in history, and very recent history too, when men have vainly flattered themselves that the world had grown too wise to engage in the work of mutual destruction. It has been well observed by a modern French writer, that in 1791 Camille Desmoulins published a work entitled 'La France Libre,' in which may be found these words 'L'esprit de conquête est perdu.' Yet at that very hour came

forth from the military school of Brienne, a sub-lieutenant of artillery who was destined to be the greatest conqueror that the world had ever seen! There may be seen at the Mint in Paris, a medal struck by Bonaparte, when First Consul, the motto of which is, 'Paix de l'univers.' And in 1787 Mr. Pitt said, in one of his speeches, 'The time is at hand, when, conformably to the will of Providence, the two great nations of France and England will show the world that they were made to cherish relations of mutual beneficence and friendship.' Little did the speaker imagine that these two nations were then crossing the threshold to long years of carnage, in comparison of which all former wars were mere skirmishes. . . .

"Do we rely on the influence of religion? It has been observed, that she has for ages come to an understanding with war. She has greatly mitigated its horrors. Some of her most eminent and exemplary professors have defined its province and traced its laws. In all Christendom only one small sect opposes and condemns all war. . . . . .

"Shall we turn to modern philosophy? Who has ever inveighed more eloquently against war than Voltaire? Yet it has been truly said, that his disciples, his successors, as it were his executors, saturated the earth with blood.

"Shall we look to education? At the first 'silver snarling' of the trumpet, mark the kindling eye and beating heart of that educated English youth. Crecy

and Poictiers are parcel of his English nature. Modern accomplishments are but straw to the fire in the blood.

"Railways and steam-ships may do much to promote peace among nations. But to the thoughtful mind, the new power of nature, subjugated to human uses *since the last general war*, has other, but sinister and portentous aspects. It affords such means of offence by land and sea,—such facility of concentrating aggressive as well as defensive forces, of overleaping ancient boundaries and holding new conquests, that its effects in remodelling the earth may turn out to be as unexpected and marvellous in war as in peace. The very possession of a novel and untried means of offence will add a double intensity to the passions of cupidity, vengeance, and fear. What living soul can foresee either the venture or the stakes, when the awful game of war comes to be played again with the power of steam! What tremendous changes may a convulsion among the nations, by the help of that new agency, permanently effect! Meanwhile, the principles of human nature, which from the commencement of authentic history have periodically and invariably produced wars, remain the same. National pride and resentment, the scrupulosity of national honour, the love of novelty and excitement, the domestic difficulties of statesmen, the undue preponderance in other nations of the democratic element, knowing little and acting intemperately, are a dormant but fulminating compound, which may at any moment explode in an unexpected and universal war.

"War is of all calamities the greatest. But seeing that it has been so long and so often permitted, we may reverently suppose that it is not without its permanent uses in the economy of Divine Providence, and therefore may be permitted again. It does not, after all, cause a single death that would not otherwise have happened. Which, on an average, is the worst,—death in the field, or the dying strife of the natural death-bed? War is the theatre of great talents and great virtues. The vain theories, the Epicurean principles, the luxurious and enervating habits of peace, perish together. The storm clears the atmosphere, and the moral health of nations is renovated.

"But if war be the greatest of calamities even to a nation well prepared, what would it be should the storm burst suddenly on a nation unprepared? The answer lies in a word,—DESTRUCTION."

Such are the thoughts of a clear-sighted and reflecting mind, and of one having no professional bias leading him to such conclusions, on the general question of the nation's duties, and its real interests. To descend to the question of the purpose of the present volume, it may be stated, without hesitation, that the leading idea was suggested by Sir Edward Creasy's well-known and popular work.* And to the querist or

* "The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World. By Sir E. S. Creasy, Chief Justice of Ceylon."

objector it may be replied, that there is no more difficulty in pointing out those which have a claim to the title of "the great battles of England," than in designating "the decisive battles of the world."

But the author wishes to repel, at the outset, what may be a very natural supposition—that he fixed upon the number *twelve*, at starting, as a complete and popular number, and so proceeded to fill up an outline arbitrarily fixed in his own mind. He began with no such idea. He had no purpose or wish to discover *twelve*, or any other number; but in passing in review the history of England, he found that there were just twelve battles, *and no more*, which had a distinct and undeniable claim to be held in everlasting remembrance by all Englishmen.

A far larger number were rejected, for the same reason which leads most Englishmen to blot them, as far as possible, out of their memory. Who can look back without pain and grief on "the wars of the Roses;"—a continuous struggle of thirty years, which is said to have "cost the lives of eighty princes of the blood, and to have almost annihilated the ancient nobility of England?" In the course of this deadly strife, no fewer than twelve pitched battles were fought, in one of which the Yorkists killed as many as thirty-six thousand of the Lancastrians. But so conscious are all our historians of the sad and shameful character of this warfare, that they abstain from giving any particulars. We

know neither *how* these battles were lost or won, or *by whom* the victorious armies were commanded. The very dates are often uncertain; and the details are scarcely ever given. Honour could flow to no one from such deeds. There is not a family in England that boasts itself of laurels won at Barnet, or Tewkesbury, or St. Alban's.

Similarly lamentable were the wars which were carried on from time to time between England and Scotland. In the two centuries which elapsed from the time of Edward III. to that of Henry VIII., the English slew of the Scots at Halidon Hill, Dupplin, Durham, Hamildon, Floddon, and Pinkie, at least one hundred thousand men, not without loss on their own part; while the "border-raids" which were constantly going on, raised the aggregate sacrifice to a quarter of a million of human beings in the prime of life! Such were the fatal fruits of the great victory of Bannockburn; a battle in itself full of interest; but in its consequences most dolorous as well as most important:—but upon subjects so painful who would wish to dwell?

Or why attach any exaggerated importance to the contests of Charles I.'s day? The comparatively insignificant affairs of Marston Moor, Naseby, and Worcester, can hardly be raised to the rank of "great battles." Nor did the fate of the nation turn mainly on the issue of these contests. It was in the Cabinet and in the Senate, more than on the tented field, that the real strife of parties

in those days was carried on; and the issue of one or two battles was not of any great or vital importance to the final result.

Our selection, then, rests upon grounds which are abundantly intelligible. The battles which we have selected as intrinsically memorable and important, are those which naturally assert their peculiar claims.

The first is that great struggle which gave to England a new race of sovereigns; a new system, and a new life. It is also memorable as one of the most desperate struggles upon record, between two armies amounting together to one hundred and twenty or one hundred and fifty thousand men, and contending, on each side, for their very existence.

The next two battles were really great, both in the numerous armies engaged, and in the immensely-important results which followed. The first united Scotland with England: the second effected a new separation of the two countries, which lasted, to the great injury of both, for more than two hundred years,

Then follow the three wonderful victories of Crecy, Poictiers, and Agincourt; the right of which to take their place among "the great battles of England" none will question; although it remains indisputably true, that they were battles which *ought never to have been fought.*

The signal and all-important triumphs of Marlborough over the armies of Louis XIV. are noticed in their turn. The last of Marlborough's victories, the

terrible battle of Malplaquet, is not described, both because it was barely a triumph, and also because, unlike his former ones, it produced no results, except exhaustion, and a reluctant peace.

Of the many Peninsular victories of Wellington, those three are selected which seem most justly to claim the highest rank. The first, as boldly meeting and checking the French invaders, regardless of a vast disparity of numbers.—The second, as triumphing over them.—The third, as expelling them from the realm of which they had so long held military possession. And Waterloo, that "world's earthquake,"—that "five battles rolled into one," fitly and gloriously closes the series.

The author again repeats, that he had no desire or purpose to find just *twelve* great battles; but he has selected these for the reasons which he has assigned; and he remains of opinion, that there are no other events of the like class in English history, which can claim to stand in the same rank with those which he has chosen.

April, 1861.

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THE TWELVE BATTLES.

I.

HASTINGS.

A.D. 1066.

ALTHOUGH we are accustomed to speak of our Saxon forefathers with respect, and sometimes even with veneration, we must acknowledge, on a review of the history of their times, that during the last two centuries of their dominion they oftener claim our pity than our esteem. The incursions of the Danes, which in Egbert's days had begun to be formidable, grew in the time of Alfred to the dimensions of a conquest. For nearly an hundred years, their ravages extended over every part of the land: Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Notts, Kent, Middlesex, Berkshire, Dorset, and the Eastern counties, submitted to them again and again, and large sums paid to them by way of tribute proved the broken spirit of the Anglo-Saxons. Alfred, and one or two of the ablest of his descendants, succeeded in keeping these invaders in check for a few years at a time; but their audacity, and the terror of the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants, continually increased, until, at the commencement of the

eleventh century, one of our historians thus depicts the lamentable condition of the land:—

"Numerous treasons and accumulated defeats had unnerved the courage of the Saxons, while repeated victories had inspired the Danes with the idea that they were invincible. One Northman was considered to be a match for ten Englishmen. Hence the open country was abandoned to their mercy;—they systematically destroyed whatever they could not carry away; and reduced to ashes every monastery, village, and town. The labours of agriculture were suspended or abandoned, and in some years the scarcity was so great that the Danes themselves were obliged to quit the land in search of provisions."

At last, about A.D. 1016, the Anglo-Saxons wholly succumbed to their terrible invaders, and under Canute and his sons, the realm of England became a possession of the Danes. For a few years, from 1042, under Edward the Confessor, the Saxon power seemed to revive; but on his death the sovereignty became an object of contention to two warlike and ambitious men, whose claims, on the ground of right, were alike of the weakest description. The rightful heir to the crown, as the lineal descendant of Egbert and of Alfred, was Edgar Atheling, the cousin of the late king. But he was both young and of so mild and unaspiring a temper as to be wholly unfit to cope with the present emergency. The powerful Earl Godwin had left a son, Harold, who openly aspired to the crown. His sole title, if it could be called by that name, was, that of being brother-in-law to the deceased king,—the queen of Edward the Confessor having been his sister.

Harold, however, had a formidable rival in the able and ambitious Duke of Normandy. The title, or rather

the ground of claim, of this prince was little better than that of Harold. At the beginning of the century, Richard, Duke of Normandy, gave his sister to Ethelred, the Anglo-Saxon king of that day. He was succeeded by his son Robert, to whom Queen Emma of England was consequently aunt. Duke William followed his father Robert, and always kept his eye upon England; where his great-aunt, Emma, the dowager-queen, still dwelt. He paid a visit to King Edward the Confessor, in the latter years of his reign; and found that Edward, even then, was not indisposed to adopt him as the heir to the crown. He, however, was obliged to return into Normandy, and thus Harold was left to prosecute his designs, during the last few years of Edward's reign.

One circumstance, however, gave William an apparent advantage. Harold, visiting, on a mission from King Edward, the Norman court, was surprised into giving a promise to support Duke William's pretensions. This promise was insincerely given, but the Norman prince immediately called upon him to confirm it by oath; and he saw not how to refuse compliance.

Still, when Edward's death occurred, A.D. 1066, Harold was on the spot, and found many zealous partizans. He was a Saxon, that is, a native of the land. He had gained the clergy to his side; and the citizens of London espoused his cause with the greatest warmth. Seizing the opportunity, he assembled his friends, received an unanimous vote, and was crowned king by one of the archbishops, on the day following Edward's death.*

The tidings soon reached the Duke of Normandy, and greatly disturbed him. His agitation was perceived by

* By Stigand of Canterbury, say some historians: by Aldred of York, say others.

his courtiers, and one asked him, "My lord, why not communicate the cause of your grief and anger to us." William replied, "The cause is, the death of Edward of England, and the wrong which Harold has done me." The knight replied, "Sir, chafe not at a thing which may be amended. Yours is the right; strike boldly for it."

The duke accordingly began by sending an ambassador to England, who thus addressed Harold: "William Duke of Normandy reminds thee by me, of the oath which thou didst swear to him, upon the holy relics." Harold replied: "It is true that I did swear such an oath, but I swore it under compulsion. I promised that which I could not perform; for the royalty is not mine, and I cannot divest myself of it."

William thereupon made public everywhere what he termed the falsehood of the Saxon; and he applied for, and obtained, a bull from the pope, authorizing him to enter England, in order to "bring back the kingdom to its obedience to the Holy See." He also began to collect an armament for the invasion of that which he deemed his own rightful inheritance. Yet it seems probable that the power of Normandy would have proved insufficient for such an enterprise, while England had such a leader as Harold; had not an attack from another quarter greatly aided the schemes and purposes of the Norman prince.

Tostig, the brother of Harold, had always shown himself a violent and despotic chief; and he was now bitterly envious of Harold's elevation. He joined his forces with those of Harald Hardrada, king of Norway, who landed in Northumberland, and drove the earls Edwin and Morcar into York. Harold, who had been watching anxiously the movements of William on the

Norman coast, was now compelled to turn his attention to the northern counties of England. He marched his army into Yorkshire, and on his approach the Norwegians retired to Stanford Bridge, on the Derwent. Here, on the 25th of September, 1066, a great battle was fought, in which both Hardrada and Tostig fell, and such a slaughter of the invaders took place, that, fifty years after, the whole field of battle was still whitened with the bones of the slain.

But this forced march into the north was fatal to the Saxon king. Four days after the battle, *i. e.*, on the 29th of September, William landed his army at Pevensey, near Hastings. Had Harold been in the south, it is certain that that landing would have been warmly contested. But now there was no force to resist such a power as the Duke of Normandy brought into the field; and he placed his army, without opposition, on the hills of the Sussex coast. William had spent the whole year in active preparations. He had justly deemed his enterprise a mighty one, and he had thrown his whole soul into it. Everything which he could realize was given to this work; and the future was deeply pledged to its success. Any one who could render important aid, might obtain the most liberal assurances of future reward. A bishopric in England, for instance, was promised to a monk of Fescamp, who provided a vessel and twenty soldiers. All the ports of Normandy resounded with preparations for the conquest of England. Everywhere ships were built or repaired, armour forged and weapons sharpened; while all the soldiers of fortune of western Europe thronged into Normandy, to take service under the warlike and enterprising duke. Knights of the highest fame gladly enlisted in so noble

an adventure; and the names of Eustace of Boulogne, Aimery de Thouars, Hugh d'Estaples, William d'Evreux, William de Warenne, Roger de Montgomery, Charles Martel, and Geoffrey Giffard gave confidence to the thousands who found such leaders at their head.

By the middle of September the fleet was ready to sail. But contrary winds long detained it. At last, at daybreak of September 27th, the sun shone forth, the wind was favourable, and the whole coast was covered with troops embarking. The historians differ greatly as to the strength of the fleet; some speaking of two thousand vessels, others, of four hundred great ships, and a thousand transports; and the most moderate statement giving the number as *seven hundred, wanting four*. Most of them, however, agree in representing the strength of the army embarked as being sixty thousand men. And as a large part of the force consisted of cavalry, it is certain that the flotilla which could convey such an army must have been exceedingly numerous.

This great army landed in the bay of Pevensey, without the least opposition, and took the road to Hastings; near which a camp was formed, and two wooden forts hastily erected as depôts for provisions. The news was carried to York with all the celerity that was possible in those days, that Duke William of Normandy, with a large army, was now encamped on English soil. The Saxon king moved southwards with the greatest speed that he could use; and, in truth, it is rather difficult to understand the rapidity of his movements. The news which had been carried to York, that the Normans had landed, could hardly have reached that place before the 4th or 5th of October; yet, on the 13th of that month we find Harold at Hastings at the head of an army. It is there-

fore without any surprise that we read, that a large part of his force had deserted him on the road from York. It is quite clear that his eagerness to reach his foe had excited him to a speed with which no considerable number of foot-soldiers could be expected to keep up.

Hence the Saxon king was forced to halt in London to recruit his forces. Doubtless the people of the metropolis, and of Kent and Surrey, now well informed of the presence of the Normans, were arming themselves for the field; and accordingly we are told that in six days Harold felt himself a match for his antagonist.

Evidently, his victory in the north had created in him an overweening confidence. The invaders might easily have been defeated by a Fabian policy. William had no partisans in England, and had the country been wasted before him, and a guerilla warfare been resorted to, the eventual success of the Saxons could not be doubted. But Harold rejected all counsels of this kind. "He would not burn houses and villages, nor would he take away the substance of his people." He came to fight a battle for his crown; a resolve which gave to the invaders their only chance of success. Messages were now transmitted between the two camps. William sent a monk named Hugues Maigrot, to offer to Harold his choice of three courses: to resign the throne; or to refer the question to the decision of the pope; or to decide the quarrel between them by single combat. Harold rejected all three. William then sent the monk a second time, with a proposal to divide the land, and to leave to Harold all beyond the Humber.

Maigrot was also instructed to warn Harold of his perjury, and of the pope's bull of excommunication which the duke had brought with him. He delivered

this warning with great solemnity; and the English chiefs looked at each other, as in some sort daunted by it. But they soon began to remind each other that William had promised to enrich his followers with their lands and all their possessions, and that even their wives and daughters would be at the mercy of the Normans. Hence they finally resolved to listen to no proposals; but to drive out the invaders, or perish in the attempt.

After a day had been wasted in these negotiations, it was at last announced, on the night of the 13th of October, that the next day would be the day of battle. The Norman camp was filled with priests, chanting litanies, hearing confessions, and granting absolution. The Saxons spent the night in singing their old war-songs, and in emptying, over their watch-fires, horns filled with wine or beer. From the sort of confidence which all the chroniclers state to have been exhibited by Harold, and by the English army, we must conclude that their force, however hastily collected, was formidable in numbers as well as in resolution.

When the morning dawned, the bishop of Bayeux, half-brother to the duke, celebrated mass for the whole Norman army, and gave his blessing to the troops. He then mounted a white charger, took a baton of command, and marshalled for the field a division of cavalry. The duke's force was drawn up in three divisions for the attack. In each division the archers marched first; then came the men-at-arms; and then the cavalry, commanded by the greatest knights. The duke rode a Spanish charger, which had been sent him from Compostella. He wore round his neck the relics on which Harold had sworn, and the great standard, blessed by the

pope, was carried at his side by Toustain le Blanc. He then made a short speech to the army, exhorting everyone to fight his best; for, said he, "What I gain, you gain; if I conquer, you conquer; if I take the land, you will share it."

Meanwhile, a kind of religious terror possessed some minds in the English camp. Harold's younger brothers, Gurth and Leofwin, besought him to leave the battle to them, and to go to London for reinforcements. "Thou canst not deny," reasoned they, "that thou hast sworn to Duke William an oath, on the relics of saints; why risk a combat with perjury against thee? Leave it to us, who have taken no oath; and who may lawfully defend our country." But Harold was a warrior of prowess, and felt no fear; and he spurned all timid counsels.

The Norman army soon came in sight of the Saxon camp, which lay to the north-west of Hastings. The priests and monks who accompanied the invading forces, now retired to a neighbouring hill, to pray, and to watch the combat. A Norman, named Taillefer, spurred his horse to the front, and began to sing, with a loud voice, the song of Charlemagne and Roland. As he sang he played with his sword, throwing it high into the air, and catching it as it fell, with his right hand. The Normans repeated the burden of the song, or shouted *Dieu aide! Dieu aide!*

Coming within bow-shot, the archers and cross-bowmen began to discharge their arrows and bolts; but the high parapets of the Saxon redoubts rendered this mode of attack almost ineffectual. The palisades behind which the Saxon infantry were drawn up, stopped the Norman march, and when any attempt was made to penetrate or tear up these defences, the Saxon axe

smashed and broke through even the strongest coat of mail. This part of the attack reminds us in some degree of the onset of the French cuirassiers, and the defence of the English infantry in squares at Waterloo.

The Normans, after many efforts, fell back, unable to penetrate the English entrenchments. William now ordered his bowmen to discharge their arrows into the air, so that they might, in falling, wound the farther ranks of the English. This had some effect, though it is difficult to perceive how it could have done the English much injury. One of these arrows, however, is said to have wounded Harold in the eye, causing him great suffering. He pulled it out; blinded in that eye, and leaned upon his shield in agony. The struggle had now lasted from morning until three in the afternoon, and it seems probable that after this wound, Harold's leadership was lost to his army. But still, the English entrenchments could not be forced; and after several ineffectual attempts, dismay began to prevail in the Norman ranks, and a report was spread, that the duke was killed. William had to fly to different parts of the field to show himself, and to stop the retreat which many of the Normans were already commencing.

At last, after a long and fruitless conflict, which must have been renewed, at intervals, for several hours, the duke had recourse to a stratagem. He directed a body of horse to advance boldly against the English position, and then suddenly to retreat in confusion, as if struck with panic. The English could not resist the impulse to rush forth and pursue them. But, when thus drawn from their strong position, they found themselves exposed to a flank attack, which William had prepared against them. And now a general *melée* ensued. The

English sortie was driven back: the Normans entered the camp along with them; and the fiercest hand-to-hand struggle commenced, which lasted till the evening fell.

The great object of attack was the English standard; where Harold and his brothers were known to be; and towards which the most gallant Norman knights strove for hours to make their way.

William's horse was killed under him; and he mounted a second, which died also, and then a third. At last, the Norman onset finally prevailed; and Harold and his two brothers fell dead at the foot of their standard, which was torn up and replaced by the banner sent from Rome. The wreck of the English army, without leader or standard, prolonged the struggle until darkness rendered it impossible to recognise friend or foe.

Then, and not till then, did this desperate conflict cease. The broken and scattered army of Harold dispersed; many perishing of their wounds, and of the fatigues they had undergone. The Norman cavalry pursued them, wherever visible. At sunrise of the following morning the victorious duke drew up his army, and read the roll, marking the names of the dead or wounded. The survivors had the first-fruits of their victory in the spoils of all the slain. And thus—to use the words of an old writer, Daniel—"thus was tried, by the great assize of God's judgment in battle, the right of power between the English and the Norman nations; a battle most memorable, and however miserably lost, yet most nobly fought on England's part."

The widow of Earl Godwin, and mother of Harold, sent to the duke to ask for the body of her son; offering to give for it its weight in gold. But William rejected her request, replying, that a man who had been false to

his oath, should have no other grave than the sand of the seashore. Subsequently, however, whether by stealth or by sufferance, the remains of the last Saxon king were disinterred and removed, and were buried in the church of Waltham Abbey.

The number of the English engaged, and the total loss of the vanquished army, has never been the subject of even a surmise. The conquerors reckoned their own force to have been sixty thousand; of whom most accounts declare the larger part to have been cavalry. If this were true, it must have been indeed a powerful army. But the loss of the victors, which is confessed to have exceeded one fourth of their whole number, proved incontestably the desperate nature of the struggle; the strength of Harold's army; and the resolute and determined character of the defence which they made. It is clear that the English regarded their invaders as foes coming to rob them of all that was dear and valuable, and were resolved, as has been already said, "to drive out the Normans, or to perish in the attempt." We may safely infer, from the main features of this great contest, that had Harold and his troops been present on the approach of the Normans to the coast, their landing could never have been effected.

So ended this eventful day, the last of the Saxon rule in England; and the precursor of a hard and fearful tyranny, under which the people groaned for more than a hundred and fifty years. The fate of the day turned, in a greater degree than usual, upon the efforts and the fate of the two great leaders. Had William fallen, his enterprise would have perished with him. And so, when not William, but Harold, died, there fell with him inevitably, the Saxon monarchy. Neither William nor

Harold had a coadjutor, son, or other equal ready to take his place: and this explains why, when Harold fell, the realm became William's; slowly, indeed, but without remedy.

The gallant stand made by the English has always commanded respect. Under the peculiar perils of the moment—assailed, in August, in the north; and in September, in the south—we know not what more could have been expected of them. The two invading chiefs, too, were the most celebrated leaders of their time. With Hardrada of Norway, and William of Normandy, there were no captains of that day who could compare, excepting Harold himself. And the Saxon king, although thus sorely bested, utterly crushed and destroyed his first assailant, and would have as easily defeated the second, had he been present to oppose his landing; or had he adopted, at last, a more cautious and prudent style of warfare. Nor ought we to forget, that Harold was himself an usurper, and could not have enjoyed the full confidence of the chief men of the realm. Yet, on his fall, there remained no other leader. Submission to so great a warrior and statesman as William, was altogether inevitable.

The results of this great battle were, apparently, and really, most calamitous. The Norman rule, down to the days of John, was a hard and cruel one. As Mr. Hallam says: "The English were oppressed; they rebelled, were subdued, and oppressed again. Their risings were without concert, and desperate. They wanted men to head them, and fortresses to sustain their revolt. After a few years they sank in despair, and yielded for a century to the indignities of a small body of strangers without a single tumult."

And yet, assuredly, from the commencement of the Norman dynasty England began to rise. Before the Conquest, as we have already remarked, the realm appeared unable to defend itself against the incursions of the Danes. The Saxons often wanted either the courage or the skill, which was needed to protect the land in which they dwelt. But under the Normans all this was instantly changed. Only twice after the Conquest did the Danes venture to repeat their visits; and such was the greeting which they received, that they returned no more.

There can be little doubt that, for the power and prosperity of England, some change had become necessary. An eminent historian remarks, that "the Anglo-Saxons, once a warlike people, had greatly fallen off. Their sovereigns were, latterly, men of feeble minds; their nobles, factious and effeminate; their clergy, ignorant and corrupt; the people, servile and depressed. The ancient forms of the Saxon institutions still existed. but their spirit had evaporated. The finest island of Europe was becoming the residence of a debased, divided, and ignorant people."*

On the other hand, the Normans, descended from the sea-pirates of the North, had, during their sojourn in that beautiful province of France, which was formerly Neustria, but which, from them, was called Normandy—so greatly improved, that an historian of the time thus writes: "Their dukes, as they were superior to all others in war, so they as much excelled their contemporaries in their love of peace, and their liberality. Their people lived harmoniously together, like one

* Turner's Hist. Eng., vol. iv. p. 73.

great body of relations—like one family, whose mutual faith was inviolable. With them, every man was looked upon as a robber, who, by falsehood, endeavoured to overreach another in any transaction. They took assiduous care of their poor and distressed, and of all strangers, like parents of their children; and they sent abundant gifts to the Christian churches in almost every part of the world."* "To this commendation," says Mr. Sharon Turner, "we must add, that they were celebrated for a chivalrous passion for fame; that with them literature was already cultivated; that their love of adventure carried them as far as Italy and Greece; and that they are especially described by another historian, Ordericus Vitalis, as remarkable for their piety, general decorum, and the propriety of their moral conduct. They were also more civilized than most other Europeans. They had begun to shave their beards, and to cut and comb their hair. They were fond of fine houses, splendid attire, and noble ships. They were studiously clean, and delicate in their food, and in their manner of feeding."

Not unnaturally, therefore, these knights and gentlemen of France, coming among the Anglo-Saxons, soon began to deem them "barbarians." Hume and most other historians concur in describing the inhabitants, generally, as "a rude, uncultivated people, ignorant of letters, untamed to submission, addicted to intemperance, riot, and disorder." "These Saxon swine" soon became a common expression among the Normans. But the natives long retained their character for stubbornness; and hence arose continual feuds, frequent rebellions, and heavier oppression on the part of their masters. For

* Glaber Rodulphus, ch. v.

more than a century, among the Normans, the very name became one of reproach, and "Do you take me for an Englishman?" their most indignant disclaimer.

Yet William, had it been possible for the English people to have become loyal and submissive to him, was a monarch who had both the disposition and the power to have conferred great benefits upon them. Thus Mr. Turner says, "He deposed Stigand, (archbishop) and others, and filled their places with men from Normandy and France, who were distinguished by the characteristics of piety, decorous morals, and a love of literature. This measure was an important addition to the civilization of the island. The improvements which gradually flowed from the Norman ecclesiastics, spread through England a new spirit of knowledge and prosperity. Violence disappeared; the Normans and English began to intermarry; foreign merchandize appeared in their markets, and the Anglo-Saxons gradually imitated the dress and manners of their conquerors."*

We may admit, then, the truth of the assertion, that "the latest conquerors of England were also the bravest and the best." As the poet Campbell has remarked: "They high-mettled the blood of our veins." Hence Gibbon judged rightly, when he said: "Assuredly England was a gainer by the Conquest." And Rapin was justified in calling that event, "the *first step* by which England has arrived at that height of grandeur and glory in which we behold it at present."

* Turner's Hist. Eng., vol. iv. p. 105.

II.

FALKIRK.

A. D. 1298.

Our next two chapters must be devoted to the acquisition of Scotland by Edward I., and the loss of it by Edward II. The first may be said to have been decided at Falkirk; the second, at Bannockburn. The earliest of these two battles, therefore, will supply our present subject.

For centuries before King Edward's day, Scotland had acknowledged some kind of feudal superiority in the English crown. Edward himself, his father, and all his predecessors from time immemorial, had received the homage and fealty of the Scottish kings. But the extent and meaning of this homage varied according to the circumstances of the time. When England had a strong and triumphant king, as in Henry II., then the homage of the Scottish king was paid for his crown and kingdom; but when the English sovereign was feeble, or was otherwise occupied, then the Scotch assumed that it was only paid for lands in England belonging to the Scottish king. In this state of uncertainty the question had long remained. Attempts were made to clear up the doubt in the days of Henry III.; and when, on Edward's own coronation, Alexander of Scotland came to pay his homage, a long discussion arose as to the actual purport of this homage; which discussion

ended, at last, in the oath of homage being registered in general terms, which defined and decided nothing.

Some historians have spoken of the "restless energy," and the "boundless ambition" of Edward, as impelling him to attempt "the conquest of Scotland." The best answer to all these fictions is found in the simple fact, that for eighteen years of the prime of his life, or from the thirty-third to the fifty-second year of his age, Edward never moved hand or foot—never breathed a hostile word against Scotland. And when, in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, and the fifty-seventh year of his life, he at last entered Scotland in arms, it was not until a Scottish army had first invaded England, and ravaged all Cumberland with fire and sword.

Alexander III. of Scotland had lived for many years in perfect amity with Edward. In the year 1286 he was killed by a fall from his horse: and as his son and daughter had both died about three years before, the succession devolved upon the infant princess of Norway, his grand-daughter, and the only surviving descendant of his house. Left thus without a sovereign, the chief men of Scotland immediately had recourse to Edward, who was then in Gascony. He gave the proper and natural advice, to choose a Regency, and to carry on the government in the young Queen's name. They adopted his advice, and appointed the Bishop of St. Andrews, the Earl of Fife, the Earl of Buchan, the Bishop of Glasgow, the Lord of Badenoch, and James, the Steward of Scotland. Edward himself did not hasten his return home, and did not arrive in England until August 1289; more than two years after.

But the Scottish regents were unable to preserve the peace of the kingdom. The adherents of Baliol and of

Bruce contended, even to the verge of open war; and earnest appeals were made to Edward, by the Earl of Mar, by "the Seven Earls of Scotland," and by Robert Bruce, Lord of Annandale, calling upon him to interfere, and to restore peace. The king thereupon invited the Scotch to a conference at Salisbury, and there proposed to them a contract of marriage between his young son Edward and the young queen. They readily acceded to his proposal; and in this way Scotland, placed under the guardianship of Norway and of England, would have found tranquillity.

Most disastrously, however, this plan was frustrated, the very next year, by the death of the young princess; and at once Scotland was plunged into all the perils of a disputed succession.

Instantly fresh applications were made to Edward, by the lords of Scotland, who wrote to him, "We shall be involved in blood, unless the Most High provide a remedy by your interposition." Dr. Henry, a Scottish historian, says, "The regents, the states, and even the competitors agreed to refer this great controversy to the king of England," and "the Bishop of St. Andrews was sent into England to entreat Edward to take on him the office." Mr. Tytler, the latest historian of Scotland, admits that "there is reason to suspect, from documents lately discovered, that Bruce and his adherents had not only claimed Edward's protection, but had offered to acknowledge his right of superiority."

So invoked, Edward called a meeting of the chief men in Scotland, at Norham, on the border, on the 10th of May, 1291. He went there, attended by merely his ordinary retinue and great law officers. And his first point, as a prudent and sagacious man, was to ascertain

in what capacity he was required to act. He had been applied to again and again, for four years past, by the Scottish lords, for instructions, counsels, and decisions. Sir Francis Palgrave justly observes, "Let the English monarch be tried by the test and example of an English gentleman. If, on the death of the copyhold tenant, all the persons claiming the right of admission, unite in applying to the lord of the manor for a new grant, will it be easy for him to doubt that he is the lawful owner of the domain?"

Edward, therefore, by the mouth of his Chief Justiciary, at once asked the Scottish lords, "Do you acknowledge me as Superior Lord?" They hesitated: and he gave them until the next day to resolve upon their reply. He afterwards enlarged the time to three weeks. They were thus left at liberty to return home, and if they pleased, to prepare to deny and resist Edward's pretensions. But they did neither. On the day appointed they appeared, and the king's Chancellor now repeated the question. Robert Bruce first, and then all the other competitors, at once replied, that they acknowledged the king as Lord Paramount of Scotland, and craved his judgment as such. The king then undertook to decide the controversy, and appointed a Commission to investigate the facts and to make a report. Subsequent meetings were held, on August 2nd, 1291; on the 2nd of June 1292; and finally, on the 17th of November 1292, when Edward declared John Baliol entitled to succeed to the crown of Scotland, and ordered his officers to give him possession of the realm. Hume himself admits, that "the conduct of Edward, both in the deliberate solemnity of the proceedings, and in the justice of the award, was so far unexceptionable."

The chief object of the English king, in thus establishing the superiority of his crown, is well explained by Mr. Sharon Turner, who says—

"To be the Lord Paramount, the feudal sovereign of the whole island, as the King of France had been of Normandy, Bretagne, Flanders, and Aquitaine, while these provinces were enjoying their independent hereditary governments, was the honour to which Edward aspired; and the great political object which he would have attained by it, would have been *a termination of the predatory wars*, which had always desolated the borders of the two kingdoms. It was a species of impiety and perjury for the liegeman to make war on his feudal lord, and it exposed him to the loss of life and territory." It was the establishment of harmony and unity between the two kingdoms, and not "the conquest of Scotland," which Edward desired.

Baliol now, in December 1292, visited Edward at Newcastle, and took the oath of homage and allegiance; ending thus:—"And faith and loyalty I will bear to you and your heirs, Kings of England, of life and limb and earthly honour, against all men that may live or die." Yet in less than three years from this time, finding Edward involved in a war with France, the Scotch sent an embassy to Philip, concluded an alliance with him, and raised an army to invade England. The only plea advanced to palliate this monstrous breach of faith, is, that Edward, as Lord Paramount, had received an appeal from Macduff, Earl of Fife, against one of Baliol's decisions, and had required Baliol to appear in his court to answer it. Yet, except he was prepared to abdicate his functions as Superior Lord, all this was unavoidable. Mr. Sharon Turner justly says—

"For four years Edward did nothing incompatible with the continuance of the Scottish royalty; and it was the wilful hostility of Scotland that forced him into the field. From 1292 to 1296, though he received an appeal against Baliol's judgment, and summoned Baliol to his Parliament to answer it; yet this was the extent of his adverse conduct." Could this be any valid reason for breaking oaths, forming hostile alliances, and levying war?

Edward, however, was warned of the hostility of the Scotch leaders; and he marched northwards. "Slowe to strife," which was always a striking feature in his character, he hesitated before crossing the borders. But tidings were brought to him that the Scottish army had entered Cumberland, where, as the *Chronicle of Lanercost* tells us, they "surpassed the cruelty of the heathen: for consecrated churches they burned; women dedicated to God they ravished and slew; children of two and three years old they impaled on lances and flung into the air." The king's decision was instantly taken. He stormed and carried Berwick, being himself the first to leap the fosse. Dunbar Castle was taken; the Scottish army, coming to its aid, having been utterly defeated. Roxburgh, Dumbarton, and Jedburgh surrendered in turn; and Edinburgh Castle was opened to him after a siege of eight days. Perth and Stirling next submitted; and at Brechin, Baliol came to him, acknowledged his fault, and resigned the kingdom of Scotland, as a fief justly forfeited. He was sent to the Tower of London: and at Berwick, on the 28th of August, Edward received the submission of the whole baronage of Scotland. Their oaths of homage, and renunciation of the French alliance, fill thirty-five sheets of parchment, which are

still preserved among the archives of England. The ancient coronation-stone was removed from Scone and placed in Westminster Abbey, where it still remains. Such was Edward's first entry into Scotland; made, be it remembered, not until the twenty-fourth year of his reign, and not until the Scotch had first invaded England, and had perpetrated acts of the most savage barbarity. From his appearance before Berwick until his reception of Baliol's surrender and of the submission of Scotland, there is reckoned a period of about thirteen or fourteen weeks. So ended this great enterprise.

But the king was at issue with France; and the affairs of Scotland had merely postponed the continental war for one campaign. In 1297 he passed over into Flanders; and during his absence a revolt took place in Scotland. William Walleys, or Wallace, the younger son of a small landed proprietor, had engaged in some brawls with the English officials; and having killed one of them, had escaped into the woods. He was a man "whose make," says Mr. Tytler, "approached the gigantic; his passions were violent; and a strong hatred to the English began to show itself. He collected, by degrees, a band of men of desperate fortunes. In his attacks on straggling parties of the English, he was generally successful. Confidence came with success, and multitudes flocked round the standard of revolt."

Wallace is first heard of in May 1297. But as the summer passed on, his band of insurgents had grown into an army. In August, Earl Warrenne had collected a force in England, and was marching in quest of him. At the beginning of September the armies approached each other, near Stirling; the river lying between them,

and a narrow bridge affording the only means of passing. A Scottish knight, who rode by the earl's side, exclaimed, "If you attempt to cross the river, you throw away your lives! The men can only pass over by twos, and the Scotch command our flank, and will be instantly upon us." But this counsel was overruled, and woeful was the result. Sir Walter Scott thus describes it.

"The earl hesitated to engage his troops in the defile of a wooden bridge, where scarce two horsemen could ride almost; but urged by the imprudent vehemence of Cressingham, he advanced, *contrary to common sense*, as well as to his own judgment. The vanguard of the English was attacked before they could get into order; the bridge was broken down, and thousands perished in the river and by the sword."

The English power was now driven from the open field in Scotland, and confined within a few castles and strong places. But the nobles of Scotland, who had so recently sworn fealty to Edward, stood, with one or two exceptions, aloof from the revolt. Wallace, however, gave himself, or induced two or three men of station to give him, the title of "Guardian of Scotland;" but, in fact, he became its military dictator; and a dictator of the most savage and despotic kind. In this feature of the case concur all the Scottish historians; in short, it is from them alone that we learn it. Fordun tells us, that "if any of the great men would not obey his mandates, him he held and confined until he *wholly submitted* to his good pleasure." Hector Boethius says, "He made sic punition on tham whilk was repugnant to his proclamation, that the remanent pepil for feir thairof assisted to his purpose." And Andrew Wyntown, in his Cronykyl, says,

"The grettest lords of our lande
To him he gert them be bowand:
Ild thai, wold thai, all gert he
Bowsum to his bidding be;
And to his bidding who was not bown,
He took and put than in prisoun."

Evidently, such a mode of dealing with "the grettest lordes of the lande" on the part of the younger son of a country yeoman, whose very name was unknown six months before, amounted to a tyranny. Like most tyrannies, too, it was cruel. Thus Mr. Tytler tells us, of Wallace and his hordes, that "it was not uncommon for them to drive before them troops of aged priests and nuns, whose hands were tied behind their backs; and while the brutal soldiery and their hard-hearted leaders sat on the bridges, these unhappy wretches were cast down headlong, or compelled to precipitate themselves into the stream, while their drowning agonies were the subject of savage derision."

But the insurgent leader, having a force of this description depending upon him, deemed it necessary to find them employment. He proposed to himself a march through the northern counties of England, for the purpose of plunder. Still, feeling his strength to be insufficient for such an expedition, he had recourse to the usual means employed by a dictator. Mr. Tytler says: "The majority of the nobles being against him, Wallace found it difficult to procure new levies; and he took severe measures against all who were refractory. *Gibbets were erected* in each barony and county-town; and some burgesses of Aberdeen who had disobeyed his summons, were *hanged.* After this example, he soon found himself at the head of a numerous army." Thus reinforced, he crossed the border, and soon inflicted on the northern

counties, to use the words of an English chronicler, "all the miseries of unrestrained rapine and bloodshed." The Scottish *Encyclopædia Britannica* says, "He proceeded as far as Newcastle, wasting with fire and sword, and *sparing neither age nor sex.*" Sir Walter Scott tells us, that "increasing his forces that he might gratify them with plunder, he led them across the English border, and sweeping it lengthwise from Newcastle to Carlisle, *he left nothing behind him but blood and ashes.*" When he was, eight years afterwards, brought to trial in Westminster Hall, the charge brought against him was, that "with certain of his accomplices, he invaded the realm of England, sparing none who spoke the English tongue; but all, old men and young, brides and widows, infants and children, he murdered in a manner more horrible than could have been imagined." One fact, especially named on his trial, was, that "he had burnt a church filled with men and women."

Tidings of these things were carried to king Edward in Flanders, and naturally excited in his mind the deepest indignation. He began to hasten the preparations for his return, and ordered a summons to be issued in November, for a military rendezvous at York on the 14th of January. The manner in which that call was answered, showed that the king's feelings were fully shared by his people. To York there came, in the depth of winter, in the short, dark days of January, no fewer than one hundred thousand footmen, and four thousand horse. There could not be given a more striking proof of the eagerness of the people to inflict a condign punishment on those who had so savagely dealt with their brethren.

But Edward had not been able to quit the continent,

and dreading any repetition of the blunder committed at Stirling, he had sent orders to defer the march until his return. This great array was consequently dismissed, and it was the 21st of March before the king reached England. He held a parliament in Whitsunweek, and appointed a military rendezvous to be held at Roxburgh on the 25th of June. On that day, eighty thousand infantry assembled round their king; while the cavalry were now seven thousand, of whom three thousand were in full armour.

With this powerful army Edward marched in quest of Wallace. But with a prudence which cannot be blamed, the so-called "Guardian of Scotland" retired on his approach, wasting everything in his retreat, and leaving the country utterly bare and destitute. The king marched through Berwickshire, to Lauder and Templeliston; but no tidings of Wallace or his army could be obtained. A retreat seemed inevitable; had not the dislike of the Scottish nobles to Wallace saved the English from this disappointment. The earls of Dunbar and Angus sent the king word, that he would find Wallace in the forest of Falkirk. Edward exclaimed, "Thanks be to God! who hath hitherto extricated me from every danger. Let us instantly go to seek them." Without a moment's delay, orders were given for the march. By three o'clock the whole army was in motion. By the evening they reached a heath near Linlithgow, where the camp was pitched for the night. "Each soldier slept on the ground, his shield serving for his pillow; each horseman had his horse beside him, and the horses tasted nothing but cold iron; champing their bridles. In the middle of the night a cry was heard. The king, who slept on the heath,

while a page held his horse, was awakened by a sudden stroke on his side. The page had been careless, and the horse in changing his position, had trodden on the king while he slept. The alarm was given that the king was hurt, to allay which, he soon mounted his horse, and gave orders to march. They passed through Linlithgow a little before sunrise; and on a rising ground before them they caught sight of lances. It was the advanced guard of Wallace's army, and in a short time they obtained a view of the Scottish force, which was now preparing for battle."

Wallace would still have been glad to avoid an engagement, but a retreat in the face of seven thousand horse would have been impossible. He therefore made the best arrangement in his power. He had a large body of infantry, probably as many as forty or fifty thousand, chiefly armed with the long Scottish lance. These he formed into four squares or phalanxes, which, bristling with lances, were unapproachable to cavalry. In the intervals between the squares were posted the archers, while a body of one thousand horse waited in the rear, until an opportunity for a charge should present itself.

The king, having now made an engagement secure, wished to give his army time for rest and refreshments; but the eagerness of the soldiers would brook no delay. "Forward!" was the universal cry. "In God's name, then, let it be so," said the king. The first division, led by the earl marshal, and the earls of Hereford and Lincoln, moved forward. They soon found a marsh between them and the Scottish army, and were obliged to diverge to the left to avoid it. The second division was brought up by Anthony Beck, the warlike Bishop of Durham. He desired to wait the arrival of the king,

who led the third division; but the eagerness of his men could not be restrained. Just as the battle was thus commencing, the whole body of Scottish cavalry rode off the field. They might, indeed, from their position, perceive the hopelessness of the contest, and might be struck with a panic. But cowardice has never been a feature of the Scottish character, and it is more reasonable to account for this fact by remembering the force and terror by which Wallace had drawn his army, and especially his cavalry, together.

The Scottish squares, however, were not to be broken by any charge of either infantry or cavalry. But the king was at no loss how to deal with them. He ordered up his bowmen, probably from ten to twenty thousand in number, the common boast of whom was that each archer carried twelve Scottish lives in his quiver. Their ceaseless shower of arrows began, and the death-shafts soon filled the Scottish squares with crowds of the dead or dying. It is difficult to imagine a more deplorable position than that of forty thousand or fifty thousand brave men, armed only with lances, and exposed to the pitiless hail of these deadly arrows. It was inevitable that the squares should soon be thrown into confusion. Their ranks, disordered by multitudes of slain or wounded, would inevitably become unsteady, and the moment any opening was perceived, the heavy armour-clad English cavalry would quickly break in, and all, in an instant, would be confusion. The Scottish squares were all broken, and the fugitives followed and hewn down by thousands by the numerous cavalry of the English army. All the English historians assert that the loss of the Scottish army amounted to thirty-two thousand, while of the English no more than twenty-

eight men were slain. Such a statement at first sight appears incredible; but when we remember that there was no struggle,—no real hand-to-hand fighting, but that the Scottish squares were first thrown into confusion by the English archers, and then broken, hewn down, and followed in their flight by a numerous body of cavalry, we shall easily understand that very few battles have been fought in which, of necessity, the loss of the beaten army would be so great, or that of the victors so inconsiderable.

Wallace and a few of his followers gained the neighbouring wood; and here terminated the career of this insurgent leader, whose fall was as sudden as his rise. His name was never heard of until May 1297, and after this battle, in July 1298, "it does not recur," says Mr. Tytler, "in any authentic record; nor do we meet with him in any public transaction until his execution, eight years after." He is often spoken of by Scottish writers as having "for many years maintained a war of independence;" but all this is fiction, not history. He gained one battle, which he could hardly avoid gaining, in September 1297, and he lost another, which he could hardly avoid losing, in July 1298. And this, with his savage devastation of the northern counties in October 1297, constitutes his whole history. He was a fugitive and an outlaw for several years afterwards, and in 1305 he was seized by a Scotchman, handed over to justice, and executed. In the spring of 1297, while successful, the discontented in Scotland eagerly crowded round his standard; but so entirely was his reputation as a leader lost at Falkirk, that, though he lurked in the moors and marshes of Scotland for seven years after, he seems to have been quite unable, after that defeat, to

gather even a dozen men round his banner. Scotland continued in an unsettled and often insurgent state for four or five years after the battle of Falkirk, but, during all this time, during all these years, we hear of no single deed of daring performed by Wallace.

The decisive victory of Falkirk was greeted throughout England with the utmost joy. Old Stowe the chronicler says, "The citizens of London, hearing of the great victory obtained by the king over the Scots, made great and solemn triumph in their citie." Among other celebrations, he especially mentions that of the Fishmongers, who, "in grand and solemn procession, passed through the citie, having, among other pageants, four sturgeons gilded, carried on four horses; then, four salmons of silver, on four horses; and, after these, six-and-forty knights, armed, riding on horses made like luces of the sea; and, lastly, St. Magnus, with a thousand horsemen. Thus did they, on St. Magnus' Day, in honour of the king's great victory and safe return."*

* A considerable portion of this and the following chapter has been borrowed from a volume recently published, entitled "*The Greatest of the Plantagenets*," in which much new light is thrown upon this interesting portion of British history.

III.

BANNOCKBURN.

A.D., 1314.

THE battle of Falkirk, in its ultimate results, united Scotland with England. Some delay took place in the completion of this union, for the devastating system adopted by Wallace had left Scotland so bare of the means of subsistence that the English army was obliged that year to recross the border. Subsequently both the pope and the king of France interfered, the first laying claim to Scotland as belonging to Rome, the second asking for a truce for Scotland as one of his allies, which truce was prolonged from year to year. At last, all these hindrances being removed, early in 1303 the king prepared for a new expedition into Scotland, reaching Edinburgh in the beginning of June. In the course of that autumn he traversed most parts of Scotland, receiving the submission and fealty of the barons and great men. And on the 9th of February, 1304, Comyn, who had been styled "Regent of Scotland" for two or three years past, gave in his adhesion and that of his followers, agreeing to deliver up all the remaining places of strength, and to submit to such fines, for their past rebellion, as the king should think fit to exact.

In 1305 Edward was chiefly occupied in the settlement of Scotland, He placed the matter chiefly in the hands of Robert Bruce, who had affected great zeal for

his cause, and of Wishart, bishop of Glasgow, and John Mowbray. By their advice a Scottish parliament was assembled at Perth, in which ten commissioners were appointed to treat with the king in London. These conferences took place at the Temple in London, where, by the assistance of the Scotch delegates, who were two earls, two bishops, two abbots, two barons, and two commoners, the new constitution for Scotland was framed. These commissioners, Bruce and Wishart being the most prominent, then presented their plan to king Edward at his manor at Sheen (now Richmond) in Surrey, and the *Forma pacis Scotiæ* was agreed upon. The representatives of Scotland then "took leave of the king and returned home with the appearance of great joy and satisfaction." This was in October 1305. Shortly after Christmas the king moved through his domains in Dorset and Hants, and while in that country, in Easter 1306, tidings were brought to him that Bruce had assassinated Comyn in a church at Dumfries, and that Wishart had crowned Bruce king of Scotland.

As this Robert Bruce, by the battle of Bannockburn, succeeded in dissolving the union between England and Scotland, which it had been Edward's great object to effect, it will be necessary at the outset to say something of him. The notion which is perhaps the most current is that which regards him as a Scottish patriot, who, by asserting his country's independence, won for himself an imperishable name; but this is a mere fiction, a romance wholly destitute of foundation. Bruce was an Englishman,* and could no more feel the enthusiasm

* This is now admitted by the Scotch themselves. Thus, in the *Wallace Documents*, published by the *Maitland Club*, at Edinburgh, in 1841, we read, that "Bruce was by descent an Englishman, and probably so by affection as well as interest."

for Scottish independence which is attributed to him, than William of Normandy could be zealous for the independence of England.

Bruce, the competitor with Baliol for the crown, who was the grandfather of the Robert Bruce now before us, was a Yorkshire baron, who had long been a judge in Westminster Hall. He fought by Edward's side as an English baron at the battle of Lewes; he was also sheriff of Cumberland, and on his death was buried at Guisborough in Yorkshire. His son, the Earl of Carrick, was one of Edward's personal friends, and accompanied him to the Holy Land. A cheque of Edward's on his collector is still extant in our Record Office, desiring the said collector, De Luc, to lend to the king's dear friend Robert Bruce the sum of forty pounds, seeing that he was in want of money.

This second Robert Bruce, son of the competitor, succeeded in obtaining for his son, the young man now before us, a place in the English court. The father was always true and loyal to Edward, and was governor of Carlisle. The son, who is now beginning his career, seems to have satisfied the king of his loyalty and attachment; for we find a letter addressed him by Edward in 1304, which runs thus:

"Edward, by the grace of God, &c., . . . "to our faithful and loyal Robert de Brus, Earl of Carrick, and to all other, our good people who are in his company, greeting. We have heard that it is agreed between you and John de Segrave, and our other good people of his company, to follow the enemy, and that you desire we should hold you excused if you come not to us on the day appointed. Know that for the great diligence and care which you have used in our affairs, and because

you are thus agreed to follow the enemy, we thank you as heartily as we can, and we pray and require especially, as we confide in you," "that ye put an end to this affair before ye leave these parts."

"And thus," says Mr. Tytler, the Scottish historian, "Bruce, whose conduct had been consistent *only on selfish principles*, found himself, when compared with other Scottish barons, in an enviable situation. He had preserved his great estates, his rivals were overpowered, and, on any new emergency occurring, the way was partly cleared for his own claim to the crown." This claim, however, was barred at present, independently of Edward's right, and his possession, by the superior claims of Baliol, and his son Edward Baliol, and of Comyn, who was the son of Baliol's sister.

Bruce, then, in whom Edward had placed his trust, and on whom he had conferred many benefits, having released him only two years before from the scutage payable to the superior lord on succeeding to his estates—Bruce, now, having taken leave of the king at Richmond, in October 1305, suddenly rushes into rebellion, commenced by a base and cowardly assassination, in February 1306. As we have already seen that "a zeal for Scottish independence" could not be his motive, we must seek for that motive elsewhere; and Sir Walter Scott very lucidly indicates and describes it, observing that "Two or three generations had not converted Normans into Scots; in fact, the Normans were neither by birth or manners *accessible to the emotions which constitute patriotism*. Their education had not inculcated that love of a natal soil which they could not learn from their roving fathers of the preceding ages. The ideal perfection of the knight-errant was to wander from land to

land in quest of renown; to gain earldoms, *kingdoms*, nay, empires by the sword, and to sit down a settler on his acquisitions without looking back on the land which gave him life. Every soil was his country, and he was indifferent to feelings and prejudices which promote in others patriotic attachment to a particular country."

Bruce, then, having the usual ambition of a Norman baron, had watched events, but with an exclusively selfish view. He had shown some disposition to support Wallace; but Wallace fought ostensibly for Baliol, and accordingly Bruce soon deserted him. His name was also once or twice associated with Comyn's in the continued resistance to Edward in 1301—1303. But Comyn, too, was an adherent of Baliol's; so a second time Bruce deserted to Edward, and wrote to him, as we have seen, of his "desire to follow the enemy;" but, on his visit to Edward in October 1305, and his subsequent return home to Scotland, new views and new ideas would naturally present themselves. During his recent intercourse with the king he must have perceived that Edward's active life was already terminated: the king was now in his sixty-seventh year, and his limbs were becoming infirm. We find that when, in the course of the next summer, he had to go through the public duty of conferring knighthood in Westminster Abbey, his strength proved insufficient to enable him to discharge his part in the ceremony. Bruce, therefore, would perceive that the days of this great king were drawing to a close; and he would be aware, also, that the young prince was wholly incompetent to fill his father's throne. And thus it would naturally occur to him that a new insurrection might be commenced under totally different circumstances from any which had yet been seen. But

how was this conjuncture to be made to suit his own views and purposes?

Baliol, if the union with England were dissolved, would be the rightful heir; but Baliol and his son were both absent. But then the Comyns, who possessed the greatest power in Scotland, would espouse Baliol's cause, which was also their own. John Comyn, then the chief of the family, and the son of Baliol's sister, was the principal obstacle in his way. This obstacle, therefore, must be removed.

How this was done, Hemingford, one of the best of the English chroniclers, and who wrote at the very time, tells us in the following simple narrative:—

"In the year of our Lord 1305, Robert de Brus, grandson of that Brus who had disputed with Baliol the crown of Scotland," "relying on perverse counsel, aspired to the kingdom; and fearing Lord John Comyn, a powerful noble, and faithful to the king," "he sent to him with treacherous intent two of his brothers, Thomas and Nigel, asking him to meet him at Dumfries, to treat of certain matters; and he, suspecting no evil, came to him to the church of the Friars Minors. And when they were conversing, as it seemed with peaceful words, all at once altering his mien and changing his language, he began to inveigh against him, accusing him of having injured him in the king's estimation. And when Comyn attempted to reply, the other would not hear him, but, *as he had plotted*, he struck him with his foot, and then with his sword, and, retiring, left him to his retainers, who pressing on him, left him for dead on the pavement of the altar." *

* So write all the chroniclers of the time. But, about seventy or eighty years after, there arose three Scottish historians, Barbour,

Bruce's chief obstacle having thus been removed, his way was open; and having already committed both treason and a cowardly murder, only one course seemed left to him. Mr. Tytler justly observes, that—

"The die was now cast. Bruce had, with his own hands, assassinated the first noble in the realm, in a place of tremendous sanctity. He had stained the high altar with blood, and had directed against himself the resentment of the powerful friends and vassals of the murdered earl. He must either become a fugitive and an outlaw, or raise open banner against Edward." He accordingly collected what adherents he could, and on the 27th of March rode to Scone, and received some sort of a coronation at the hands of that same Wishart, bishop of Glasgow, who had, in the preceding October,

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Fordun, and Wyntown, the first of whom had a pension out of the Scottish Exchequer, "for compiling the book of the deeds of King Robert the First." These writers, living two or three generations after the Bruces had passed away, concoct another story;—to wit, that Comyn and Bruce had agreed upon a rising, and that Comyn revealed the whole to Edward: that Bruce, thereupon, had to escape from England, and coming to Dumfries, met Comyn, upbraided him, and at last slew him. But upon this story an intelligent Scotch writer, Mr. David Macpherson, the editor of Wyntown's *Cronykyl*, very justly remarks:—"This whole story of the transaction of Bruce with Comyn has much the air of a fable contrived to varnish over the murder, and to make it appear an act of justice in Bruce." "The story has this sure mark of fable, that the later writers give us more circumstances than the earlier ones."

To which we may add, that if it were true that Comyn had injured Bruce, that circumstance might, according to the manners of the age, have justified Bruce in defying the other to a fair and open combat. But nothing, surely, could palliate the atrocity of inveigling an unarmed man into a church, for the pretended purpose of friendly converse, and then setting armed men to murder him.

shared with him in the hypocritical protestations with which they had deceived Edward. But the rebellion was not a popular one. Its object was purely selfish—the aggrandisement of an individual. So confesses Fordun, the earliest Scottish chronicler, who says, that Bruce, with these few supporters, "had the courage to raise his hand, not only against the King of England and his allies, but *against the whole accumulated power of Scotland.*"

During the short remainder of Edward's life, however, the rebellion fared badly. Bruce was utterly routed at Johnstown by the Earl of Pembroke, and obliged to take refuge in the western isles. Here, says Fordun, "he was reduced to such necessity, that he passed a long period without any other food than herbs, and roots, and water. He wandered barefoot; now hiding alone in some of the islands; now chased by his enemies, and despised and ridiculed by his own vassals." "Compelled to harbour in the hills," says Mr. Tytler, "deprived of the common comforts of life, he and his followers presented a ragged and wretched appearance. Their shoes were worn off their feet by constant toil; and hunting, instead of pastime, became a necessity." The Lord of Lorn beset the passes, and had nearly captured Bruce. The Earl of Ross seized his wife and daughter, and handed them over to the English. His three brothers, who had all been concerned in the murder of Comyn, were captured, tried, and executed for that murder. For the first year after Comyn's assassination, "rebellion had ill luck."

But having succeeded in evading his pursuers in the winter, Bruce emerged from his retreat in the spring, and surprised and defeated several parties of the Eng-

lish. As the summer drew on, the king, who had long suffered from dysentery, could restrain himself no longer. He mounted his horse, and began his march for Scotland. But the effort was fatal; and the greatest king that England had ever known died on the borders of Cumberland on the 7th of July, 1307.

This was the event for which Bruce had been looking, and it entirely changed the whole prospects of the two kingdoms. "The two greatest knights in Christendom at that moment," says Froissart, "were King Edward and Robert Bruce." The first being taken away, the second found no equal in the field.

The value of military skill and talent, coupled with a romantic courage, soon became apparent; and when it was met by nothing but utter incompetence, the issue could not long be doubtful. Awed by the power of Edward I., Scotland, on Bruce's rising, had remained passive, or hostile to the attempt, and had given him neither aid or encouragement. But his martial achievements soon excited admiration; attention was drawn to his movements, and sympathy excited by his success; and soon all men in Scotland who could be captivated with the thought of "independence" found themselves irresistibly attracted to Bruce's standard.

Meanwhile, the weak and trifling creature who now filled the great Edward's throne, was rapidly dissipating the idea of English superiority. Immediately his father had been removed by death, the young king made a useless march into Roxburgh and Selkirkshire, and then hastily returned to England, without striking one blow for the suppression of the insurrection.

The Earl of Pembroke was left in command; but as

the young king was perpetually changing his plans, in a short time he was removed, and John de Bretagne appointed in his room. The next year another change took place, and the Earl of Angus and two other persons were substituted. In fact, in the course of a year, six different governors were appointed; and none of these, whatever might be their talents, were allowed any time for the maturing any plans for the suppression of the rebellion. Meanwhile the party of Bruce rapidly increased. His brother Edward, Sir James Douglas, Sir Alexander Fraser, and other leaders, performed prodigies of valour in different parts of the country, surprising castles, defeating English garrisons, and in various ways exciting the expectations of the people, that the expulsion of the English was at hand. Meanwhile, the incapable and frivolous king of England, occupied with the pleasures of the court, and engrossed by his infatuated fondness for his favourite Gaveston, attempted nothing beyond a variety of opposite orders and purposeless preparations.

In 1310, alarmed at the attempt of Bruce to besiege Perth, Edward II. at last carried an army into Scotland. The Scottish leader now retired, wasting the country; and the English forces were soon forced by want to retreat. Bruce then retaliated by entering Durham, and levying contributions on that bishopric. On his return, he again invested Perth, which was taken by a surprise. In 1311, Bruce again visited England, surprised and burnt Durham, and subsequently fixed his head-quarters at Chester. Edward II. was now engaged in strife with his barons, and could scarcely adopt even defensive measures.

In the next two years the castles of Roxburgh and

Edinburgh were stormed and taken by Douglas and Randolph; and Dundee shortly afterwards fell into Bruce's hands. Stirling Castle was now almost the last place of strength which remained to the English in Scotland, and the poor king was at last roused to make one effort to prevent the total subversion of the English power. He effected a partial reconciliation with his barons; and issued a summons to the whole of the military tenants of the crown, to meet him at Berwick on the 11th of June 1314. Besides the contingents of ninety-three barons, the different counties of England and Wales were required to raise twenty-seven thousand infantry. "It is impossible to ascertain," says Lingard, "the number of Edward's army." Many of the most powerful barons refused to attend, and others were excused. The Scottish historians, writing from mere tradition, seventy or eighty years after, talk of three or four hundred thousand men, which is simply ridiculous. Mr. Tytler more modestly reduces it to one hundred thousand. But, considering the disrepute into which the poor king had already fallen, and the disgust felt for all his proceedings by many of the greatest earls and barons, it is evidently unreasonable to suppose that a larger army came forth at his call, than that which followed the popular standard of Edward I. to Falkirk. As that great general only mustered eighty thousand men in 1298, we cannot rationally estimate Edward II.'s army in 1314 at more than sixty or seventy thousand. Still, it was vastly superior in numerical strength to the Scottish army, which is described as under forty thousand men, and which probably did not exceed thirty or thirty-five thousand. But Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, a few years later, showed that a

numerous army, with no general at its head, is merely a mob of armed men led out for slaughter.

Bruce was, beyond all doubt, a great general as well as a most valiant knight. Stirling Castle was the nominal prize to be fought for, though the fate of Scotland would probably be then and there decided. He drew up his army therefore near Stirling, and selected, with great skill, a position in which a small army could easily defend itself against a large one. Knowing the strength of the English army to consist largely in its heavy-armed horse, he placed his infantry behind a marshy hollow, which he saw that it would be difficult for cavalry to cross; and wherever the ground was firm, he ordered trenches to be dug, in which he placed pointed stakes, covered over lightly with turf or with herbage. Besides his regular infantry, he had obtained the aid of a large body of Highlanders, who, being but badly armed, and not fitted to encounter spears or bowmen, he placed in a hollow on one flank, with orders not to move until they were called upon.

Bruce had drawn up his army in three divisions, or "battles," as they were then called; the centre of which was commanded by the Earl of Moray; the right by Edward Bruce, and the left by Sir James Douglas. He himself took the command of the reserve, which formed a fourth "battle," drawn up behind the centre, and thus prepared to render aid to any part of the first line which might appear to want it.

It was on Sunday the 23rd of June, 1314, that the English army came in sight. Edward had hurried on with such haste, that the horses were worn out with travel and want of food; and the men exhausted by their long march. On that day little passed. Edward had

despatched a party of eight hundred horse, under Sir Robert Clifford, to pass by the Scottish army, and get into Stirling. This party was met by a Scotch detachment under Randolph, and driven back. In front of the main line, Bruce himself was riding on a small steed to take a survey of the two armies, when an English knight, Sir Henry Bohun, in full armour, rushed forward and charged him. But Robert Bruce, at that moment in the prime of his life, had perhaps scarcely his equal in feats of arms in the three kingdoms. Dashing the knight's spear aside with his axe, he dealt him a blow as he passed, which clove his helmet, and left him dead upon the ground. These two incidents naturally encouraged the hopes of the Scotch, while they tended to dispirit their opponents.

On Monday the 24th of June, both armies prepared for battle. The Abbot of Inchaffray performed mass in front of the Scottish line: and the soldiers then breakfasted under their standards. And now the van of the English army drew near; the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford being its leaders. These two earls had contended for the honour of being first in the attack; and the result was, that they rushed forward in a rash and impetuous manner. The effect of this ill-judged attack was most disastrous. The real advantage possessed by the English army consisted in its numerous and skilful bowmen. Had these been brought to the front, as at Falkirk, they would have destroyed the Scotch army in a couple of hours. But the proud and headstrong knights could not wait for this sure measure, they threw themselves on the Scottish spears, and this in a disorderly manner. Bruce's precautions were effectual. Many of the English heavy horses were entangled in the marsh, others sank

into the concealed trenches, and those who could reach the Scottish squares found the spears, like the English bayonets at Waterloo, confronting them on every side. The archers, too, by some lamentable negligence, had been left unprotected; for Bruce was able to send a body of five hundred horse among them, who scattered and drove them off the field.

Meanwhile, both armies pressing onwards, the two lines were hotly engaged, Bruce's reserve, as well as the first three divisions, being all called into action. The narrow front afforded by Bruce's position, enabled thirty thousand men easily to maintain their ground against double their number. But just when the issue was doubtful, the word was given, and the hidden mass of Highland gillies rushed forward with their wild war-cry. This sudden reinforcement, at the moment when all attempts to shake the Scottish line had failed, decided the battle. The English gave way, and the Scotch on all sides pressed forward. The best English knights, in shame and despair, threw themselves on the Scottish lances. Thus fell the Earl of Gloucester, Sir Robert Clifford, and Sir Edmund Mauley. Sir Giles de Argentine accompanied the king a little way in retreat; and then, with his war-cry of "An Argentine!" charged the squadron of Edward Bruce, and fell pierced with countless spears. The banners of twenty-seven English barons were laid in the dust, their masters having fallen. The river received multitudes of the fugitives, and the whole loss of the English was reckoned, in round numbers, at thirty thousand men. Two hundred knights, and seven hundred squires, were among the dead.

The whole baggage, provisions, and booty of the

defeated army fell into the hands of the Scotch. Innumerable waggons, and other wheel-carriages, laden with stores, were taken by the pursuers. So great was the panic felt by the English, that five hundred of them would flee on the approach of a small party of Scottish horse.

Stirling Castle surrendered the next day; and with Bannockburn may be said to have ended the English dominion in Scotland. The poor king, who is not chargeable with cowardice, but who had shown himself altogether helpless and incompetent, fled to Dunbar, whence he passed to Berwick, and thence into England. The broken fragments of the great army which he had led into Scotland, were pursued to the very borders, with great slaughter. So entirely was the position of the two kingdoms changed, with the changed character of their leaders, that while it was said of Edward I., in 1303, that, when he approached Stirling,

> "The Scots they saw him coming, and fleeand faste they did:
> Moors and mountains over, away they drive for dread:"

so now it is recorded, that so deep a terror sank into the minds of the English, that for some years, "no superiority of numbers could encourage them to keep the field against the Scots."

The defeat at Bannockburn was, probably, the most disastrous and disgraceful defeat which a great English army ever received. It was calamitous, also, to both countries, inasmuch as it caused the continuance, for almost three centuries more, of that state of disunion and perpetual warfare which it had been the great object of Edward I.'s life to terminate. "He saw," as it has been justly said, "that before this island could

rise very high in the scale of nations, it must become one undivided monarchy, instead of three." His object was of the highest and most patriotic description; but it pleased God, for wise purposes, to postpone its fulfilment for nearly three centuries. Meanwhile, the two nations continued to weaken and injure each other. In the next reign, in 1332, 1333, and 1346 the English inflicted on the Scots the three great defeats of Dupplin Moor, Halidon Hill, and Durham, in which the Scots lost more than sixty thousand men. In fact, as Alison remarks, "Never at any subsequent period, was Scotland able to withstand the more powerful arms of the English yeomanry. Thenceforward, her military history is little else than a melancholy catalogue of continued defeats." How, indeed, could it be otherwise, since, assuming the two nations to be equally brave,—the one was, at most periods, three or four times as populous and powerful as the other.

IV.

CRECY.

A.D. 1346.

HUME truly remarks, that "the English are apt to consider with peculiar fondness the history of Edward III.; and to esteem his reign, as it was one of the longest, the most glorious also, that occurs in the annals of their nation." The truth of this remark may serve to show us, how often brilliancy is preferred to solid value, and mere "glory," to wisdom, truth, and sound patriotism. Edward III. was indeed a valorous knight, and a most successful commander, and by two wondrous victories over the French, and three over the Scotch, he raised his fame as a conqueror to the highest point. But while as a warrior and a leader he could not exceed his puissant grandfather, he falls, in all moral characteristics,—in solid wisdom, in an unswerving adherence to what was right and just, and in a sincere reluctance to engage in strife,—immeasurably below "the first English king." Indeed, the mind and soul of Edward I. seem to present, to any one who impartially studies them, the very personification of justice. Most accurately did Fabian, an old English chronicler, writing in the fifteenth century, thus describe him:—

> "This prince was slowe to all manner of strife:
> Discrete and wise, and true of his worde:
> In arms a giant." . . .

It is his "slowness to all manner of strife," which, in reality, constituted Edward I.'s chief glory. Five times was he engaged in war, yet, although he was indeed "mighty in arms," and delighted in martial exercises, never once did he engage in any war until it had become impossible for him to decline it. First, Llewellyn of Wales, although seven times summoned, refused to pay the homage which was Edward's due. English parliaments, more than once or twice, called upon the king to assert the rights of his crown; and he well knew that the real issue was, whether the Welsh prince should claim a freedom to ravage the English borders when he pleased. So called upon, Edward marched into Wales, and, without bloodshed, forced Llewellyn to sue for peace, which was instantly granted him. A few years after, both the Welsh princes, who had been generously dealt with, broke out into sudden rebellion, and without any notice, stormed a castle, slaying its defenders, and ravaging the English border. Thus compelled to strike a blow, Edward marched into Wales, Llewellyn was accidentally killed, and Wales, to the great advantage of both countries, was united to England. Scotland, Edward never approached in hostile array, until the twenty-fourth year of his reign; and then, though aware that the Scots had broken their oath of fealty, and allied themselves with France against him, he lingered, "slowe to strife," upon the border, until he found that the Scots were actually ravaging Cumberland with fire and sword. His subsequent march into Scotland, in 1298, was undertaken to restore peace, and to punish Wallace's cruel ravage of the northern counties. As for the war with Philip of France, it was forced upon Edward by Philip's trea-

cherous seizure of England's finest foreign possession. Michelet, the French historian, confesses, that "the great province or kingdom of Guienne, had been *filched* from its former owner." He could not avoid making an effort to regain it, except by submitting to the utmost dishonour and disgrace. Thus, in every instance, war was forced upon this king, and never willingly undertaken by him. A war for "glory," or for conquest, would evidently, have been repugnant to his sense of right.

And, in this respect, he stands, among great warriors, almost alone. Assuredly his grandson, whose reign was filled with martial exploits, cannot for an instant abide a comparison with him. Edward III. was, indeed, like his great ancestor, "in arms a giant;" but we cannot claim for him the brighter and nobler glory, of being "slowe to strife; discrete and wise, and true of his worde." In fact the three great battles in France, which we shall have next to describe, were, one and all, battles which *ought never to have been fought;* since they were incidents in a war which the kings of England ought never to have commenced. They are deemed "glorious victories," but they ought rather to be deemed merciful and undeserved deliverances. At Crecy, at Poictiers, and at Agincourt, small English armies, footsore and weary, were found wandering over France on some desperate and undefensible enterprise. They were intercepted, and summoned to surrender, by large French armies; numerous enough to have surrounded and starved them. They broke their way through; defeating their proud and confident antagonists with great slaughter. They were thus enabled to escape to England, "covered with glory," but having effected

nothing. These were not enterprises which would have suited the taste of Edward I. He was "discrete and wise;" and he never drew sword but in a "just and necessary war." Mere "glory" had no charms for him; and to overrun a country which was rightfully another's, would have seemed to him an act unbecoming a king.

Edward III. had no valid pretence for the wars which he carried on with France. He had no more title to the throne of that kingdom, than Bruce had to the crown of Scotland. But, like Bruce, he had the ambition of a Norman knight, who generally, as Sir Walter Scott observes, made it his business "to wander from land to land in quest of renown; to gain earldoms, *kingdoms*, nay, empires by the sword." *

Hence, advancing the wholly untenable ground that because his mother was a daughter of Philip the Fair, he had a right to succeed to that crown,—though the last three kings had all left daughters, and the true heir according to the law of France, was Philip de Valois,—he commenced a war with France in 1338, which continued, with some intermissions, for more than thirty years, and which cost England vast treasures, and many valuable lives, and occasioned to France enormous loss and suffering.

Perhaps the battle of Crecy, of which we are now about to speak, was one of the most excusable, as well as one of the most splendid, passages of this long warfare. For when king Edward, in the twentieth year of his reign, A.D. 1346, embarked an army of thirty thousand men at Southampton, he did it, not in that instance for

* Hist. of Scotland, vol. i. p. 68.

conquest, but for the defence of his ancient possession of Guienne; which his war with the king of France had brought into peril.

The English force is stated by Froissart to have consisted of four thousand men-at-arms and ten thousand bowmen; besides a body of Irish and Welsh irregulars, who are variously computed at from ten thousand to eighteen thousand. The king's first object is stated to have been to sail into Gascony, in order to relieve the Earl of Derby, who was at that time threatened by a large French army. But six days of contrary winds frustrated the plan. Forced to anchor on the coast of Cornwall, the king found his provisions diminishing, his men becoming disheartened, and the success of his project growing very doubtful. Sir Godfrey de Harcourt began to urge the necessity of changing his course, and of disembarking in Normandy; from whence they might so threaten the French capital as to force Philip to withdraw his army from Guienne. This advice was readily adopted by Edward, and on the 12th of July, 1346, the whole English fleet anchored in the roads of La Hogue, on the Norman coast. Here there was no force to withstand them. Carentan, St. Lo, and Caen, then a large and populous city, were all taken with ease; and a considerable amount of spoil, with sixty French knights, and three hundred citizens of Caen, were transmitted to England.

Philip of France could not hear of this invasion without a very natural indignation. He sent the Constable of France and the Count de Tancarville to Caen to reconnoitre, but they incautiously fell into the hands of the invaders, and were sent prisoners to England. But Philip lost no time in sending to all parts for aid, and

soon a great army began to gather round him. His object naturally became to keep Edward employed in Normandy until he should have collected a force sufficient for his destruction. Edward, on the other hand, was an able commander, and his policy was to strike at once. He wished to cross the Seine, and to bring on an action quickly, or else to march through Picardy into Artois, and so to reach his friends and allies in Flanders. But at Rouen he found the bridge broken down, and Philip with his army on the opposite bank. Edward marched along the left bank of the river, plundering the towns of Vernon, Mantes, and Poissy; but he could not reach Philip, whose army was rapidly augmenting, and who desired to defer an engagement till all his reinforcements should have joined. At last, by a stratagem, Edward succeeded in passing the river. Making as if he were marching with his whole army upon Paris, he succeeded in inducing the French to proceed in the same direction. Meanwhile, suddenly returning, the English rapidly repaired a bridge which had been broken down, and on the 17th of August passed the river. Edward now marched towards the Somme, burning the suburbs of Beauvais, and plundering Pois and other towns.

Philip, vexed at having been outmanœuvred, reached Amiens by forced marches, resolved to prevent Edward from escaping over the Somme. The French army had now been swelled by continual reinforcements to more than one hundred thousand men, and Philip resolved to fall upon the English. So near were the two armies, that on the 22nd Edward slept at Airaines, and in two hours after he had left in the morning, Philip entered it, sitting down to the dinner which had been prepared

for his foe. The great object of Edward was to cross the Somme, and Philip's resolve was to prevent him from so escaping. A countryman was found who was acquainted with the ford of Blanchetaque, and who consented, for a large reward, to lead the English army across. The troops began to march at midnight, but when they arrived at the ford the water was not yet sufficiently low, and at sunrise they beheld the opposite bank lined with twelve thousand Frenchmen, led by Sir Godemar du Fay. About ten o'clock it was reported that the river was fordable, and the king gave the command to make the passage. The French, not waiting for their landing, dashed into the water to meet them, and a fierce encounter took place in the middle of the stream. But the French were routed with a loss of two thousand men, and the English army finally gained its point. When Philip arrived in pursuit, he found only a few stragglers, and the rising of the tide stopped his progress. He led his army to Abbeville, and the English took possession of Crotoi, a small port, where they found a supply of wine.

But now Edward would retreat no farther. "I am now," he said, "on the inheritance of my mother (the county of Ponthieu), and I will defend it against every adversary." It is pleasing to meet with even this slight sign of the working of conscience. The king, though he had been burning and plundering many towns of France, originally set forth to succour his own territory of Guienne, and he now resolves to make his final stand on his own inheritance of Ponthieu.

On the 25th of August the two armies were occupied in preparations. Philip spent the day at Abbeville, where some thousands of additional troops joined his

already enormous army. Edward gave his men rest and refreshment, and prepared for the tremendous encounter which was before him. He chose his field of battle, and gave his captains their instructions. In the evening he gave them all a supper, and entertained them cheerfully, and with predictions of victory. He then retired to an oratory, where he prayed to God, says Froissart, to preserve him in the encounter of the morrow. About midnight he went to rest, but rising early, he and his son, the Prince of Wales, received the communion, and his captains and the troops, as far as possible, joined in religious services.

His little army, naturally reduced in numbers from the work of the past six weeks, was now carefully drawn up. A month before, Froissart states their number to have been three thousand men at arms, six thousand archers, ten thousand infantry, probably including the irregulars. But he now very carefully gives us the strength of the whole array. The first battalion, he says, consisted of eight hundred men at arms, two thousand archers, and one thousand Welshmen. It was led by the earls of Warwick and Oxford, who had with them the Prince of Wales, then in his fifteenth year. The second consisted of eight hundred men at arms, and twelve hundred archers, and it was commanded by the earls of Northampton and Arundel. The third, under Edward's own command, consisted of seven hundred men at arms and two thousand archers. The king then reviewed the whole, riding from company to company, speaking to all, and expressing his hope of victory. At ten o'clock he ordered refreshments to be taken by all; the men sitting in ranks on the ground with their bows and helmets before them.

The English army, then, mustered less than ten thousand men, though doubtless some of the Irish and Welsh irregulars were in the rear, and were not included in this enumeration. But now approached the enormous French army. Michelet says, "the *immense mob* of the French army was advancing with great din. The king was advised to let his troops have some rest, but the great lords continued to advance, each emulously striving to be foremost." Froissart says, "There is no man, unless he had been present, that can imagine the confusion of that day, or the bad management and disorder of the French, whose troops were out of number." The various accounts differ as to the numerical strength of this "immense mob," but few reckon it at less than a hundred thousand. As for the king himself, when he came up and saw the English, "his blood was stirred, for he hated them." And he said to his marshals, "Order up our Genoese to the front, and begin the battle."

These Genoese archers were relied upon to meet the English bowmen. But they were foreign mercenaries; and they now began to show backwardness. There had been heavy rain, with thunder and lightning. They had had a long march that morning, and they pleaded that they were tired, and that their bowstrings had been spoilt by the rain. Meanwhile the English were beginning to discharge some "bombards;" for artillery had recently been brought into use in war.

The Genoese, however, with some trouble, were brought into line, the Count of Alençon raving at them, and crying out, "This is what one gets by employing such scoundrels!" As they began to approach the English, they set up a loud shout, which had no effect on their antagonists. They then gave a second shout,

and a third, advancing a few steps. They then presented their cross-bows; whereupon the English bowmen gave them such a discharge of arrows, that in Froissart's words, "it seemed as if it snowed."

Thus received, the Genoese started back, some flung their cross-bows on the ground, and all began to retreat. But immediately behind them was a large body of men at arms; and Philip, enraged, cried out, "Kill me these scoundrels! for they stop our way without doing us any service." Whereupon the men at arms began to lay about them, killing all the Genoese who came in their way. Meanwhile the English arrows came thicker and faster, falling now among the men at arms, killing horses and men, and producing the utmost confusion. Meanwhile, some of the Welsh irregulars, armed with large knives, slipped between the ranks, and, stabbing horses and men, added to the general disorder.

At last, some of the French leaders, gallant knights and good soldiers, got clear of this confusion, and fell upon the English battalions. Some earnest fighting now took place; and so numerous were the French knights and men at arms, that, for a time, the issue of the battle was doubtful.

Edward knew that his eye was needed as a commander, and he was watching the struggle anxiously; when a messenger from the Earl of Warwick requested instant succour for the prince's division, which was hardly pressed, "Is the prince killed or wounded?" asked the king. "No," replied the messenger. "Then," said Edward, "tell Warwick to look for no aid from me; nor to send to me for help. I desire that you let the boy win his spurs, for I am resolved that the honour of the day shall be his."

Many of the French lords behaved gallantly; but in vain. The King of Bohemia, old and blind, demanded to be led into the thickest of the battle; and there his body and the bodies of his attendants, were found the next day among the dead. The Count of Alençon and the Count of Flanders advanced in regular order upon the English, and made the issue of the day for a time doubtful. But the ranks of the English could not be broken.

The French knights being unable to make any impression on the English battalions, Alençon then attempted to turn their flank; but here he was repulsed with great slaughter by a body of archers despatched by the king to oppose him. Philip himself now rushed into the fray. He was wounded, and his horse was killed under him. Finally, nearly all the leaders,—Alençon, Flanders, St. Pol, Auxerre, Blois, Lorraine, and many other great lords of France,—fell gallantly fighting. Philip himself, at the close of the day, had not more than sixty horsemen about him; when Sir John of Hainault seized his bridle, and almost compelled him to leave the field. They rode without stopping till they reached the castle of La Broyes, where the king, and only five of all the lords of France who had followed him into the field in the morning, found refuge. But he dared not remain long in the neighbourhood of the English; so, after taking some rest and refreshment, he started again soon after midnight, and at day-break reached Amiens. The English never quitted their position, knowing their numbers to be too small to allow of their sending out any detachments.

The darkness of night coming on, the English made great fires, and began to prepare themselves for rest.

Edward, with his battalion, advanced to meet his son; and embracing him, said, "God give you perseverance; for most nobly have you acquitted yourself this day." The prince bowed low, and disclaimed any right to such commendations. "The English," says Froissart, "made frequent thanksgivings to God during the night, for the happy issue of the day; but there was no revelry; for the king had forbidden all riot and noise."

The next morning there was a great fog. The king sent out the two marshals, with five hundred lances and two thousand archers, to see if the French army could be discovered. This detachment found nothing of the beaten army; but it came in contact with a body of troops coming from Rouen and Beauvais to join Philip's army. The English immediately attacked them, and a sharp fight ensued, but the French soon turned and fled. Shortly after, the Archbishop of Rouen and the Grand Prior of France, attended by a large body of good men at arms, came in sight. A second contest ensued; but this party, like the other, was routed with great loss. Froissart states the loss of the French on this day, at upwards of seven thousand men; adding, that had the day been clear, "not one soul would have escaped."

Meanwhile the king, in his camp at Crecy, sent Lord Reginald Cobham, Lord Stafford, and three heralds, to pass over the field and to number the slain. They took much pains to examine the banners of the fallen, and spent the whole day in the work, returning only when the king was sitting down to supper. They reported to him, says Froissart, that they had found eighty banners on the field, the bodies of eleven princes, twelve hundred knights, and about thirty thousand common soldiers. As the old chronicler observes that the stragglers and

detachments met with and slain on the following day were even more numerous than those who fell in the battle itself, we may safely conclude, after allowing much for exaggeration, that the French did lose, in all, by this battle, more than thirty thousand men, including eleven peers of various degrees, and knights and baronets to the number of many hundreds.

On Monday the king prepared to march, having first ordered the bodies of the nobles and knights who had fallen to be carried to the neighbouring monastery of Montenay for interment. The army moved to Montreuil, Hesdin, and Blangy, near which latter place it encamped on Monday night, August 28. The next day it marched by Neufchatel and Estaples, and the country of Boulogne. At Wisant it rested for one whole day, and on Thursday it encamped before Calais. This siege occupied Edward several months, Philip trying in vain to relieve it. At last it capitulated, and remained an English possession for more than two hundred years.

The battle of Crecy reminds us of Waterloo in several particulars. It resembles it in the calm resolution with which the English, drawn up in squares, remained immoveable under the vehement assaults of the noblest chivalry of France. But it is chiefly remarkable as one of those battles which were won by the archers of England, to whom the present rifle-volunteers are the legitimate successors.

The bowmen of England stood unrivalled in the world. At Falkirk they broke up the solid phalanxes of Wallace. At Halidon Hill they inflicted on the Scots one of the greatest of all their defeats. At Nevill's Cross three thousand English archers put to flight David Bruce and his thirty thousand men. It came to be a

boast of an English bowman, that in his quiver he carried the lives of twelve Scotchmen; and it is this circumstance which explains the successive victories of Crecy, Poictiers, and Agincourt. The French, though they hired Genoese cross-bowmen, and had some archers of their own, never set much account by this description of force. The knight or squire on his stout war-horse, "mighty in arms," and splendidly caparisoned, thought little of the mere owner of a bow and arrow, in his buff jerkin. But the atchievement of David, who, with a sling and a stone, brought to the ground the giant with his helmet and shield of polished brass, was repeated on a large scale in these three battles. In the one which we have just described, the archers in the English army were five thousand two hundred; while opposed to them was an "immense mob," among whom every arrow might be expected to tell. But the bowmen of England were practised marksmen, and it is probable that most of their arrows found their way straight to the heads, or to some exposed parts of the bodies of the soldiers who stood directly in front of them. In this way we can understand how, with little loss to themselves, these five thousand archers might kill or wound twenty or thirty thousand men; and when the foe was put to flight, the two thousand five hundred men at arms, most of whom were probably mounted, would scour the field with sword and lance, and despatch all who were not in a condition to fly.

V.

POICTIERS.

A. D. 1356.

TEN years after the victory of Crecy, a similar event took place in one of the south-west districts of France, at Poictiers, the capital of Poiteau. Edward "the Black Prince," now in the prime of his early manhood, regarding his country as at war with France, sallied forth from the Gascon province in the summer of 1356, on a ravaging expedition, to do his enemy all the damage in his power. He left Bourdeaux with about twelve thousand men; ascended the Garonne as far as Agen, and then, turning to the left, entered central France, and overran the fertile provinces of Limousin, Querci, Auvergne, and Berri. It was harvest-time, and everywhere the harvest was seized, the towns plundered, and all captives able to pay a ransom were carried to Bourdeaux. One account states that the English army sent off no fewer than five thousand cartloads of plunder to Bourdeaux. This employment doubtless had its attractions for the army; but its commander seems to have forgotten that he was invading and exasperating a powerful kingdom, whose people and sovereign might be expected to take vengeance for such an inroad as this.

Philip of Valois was now dead, and John, his son, a

high-spirited but indiscreet prince, had succeeded him. Hearing of young Edward's performances in Limousin and Berri, "he instantly declared with an oath," says Froissart, "that he would forthwith set out after him, and would fight him whenever he could find him. He therefore issued forth a general summons to all his nobles and vassals of every kind, that they should set forth to meet him on the borders of Touraine and Blois, for he was determined to fight the English."

He soon marched from Paris, having with him a considerable body of troops, and went to Chartres to be nearer the enemy, and to gain quicker intelligence of his proceedings. Here he rested some days, and "great crowds of knights and men at arms daily joined him, from Auvergne, Berri, Burgundy, Lorraine, Hainault, Picardy, and other provinces." But as yet neither of these two princes seems to have been well informed of the other's movements.

"The prince," says Froissart, "having with him two thousand men at arms and six thousand archers, rode on at his ease, having all things at his command. They found Auvergne, which they were now overrunning, very rich and teeming with abundance; and when they entered any town, they rested there for some days to refresh themselves, consuming what they pleased, and destroying the rest, whether of corn, wine, or other provisions." "They kept advancing, and found plenty everywhere, for the provinces of Berri, Poiteau, Touraine and Maine," says Froissart, "were very rich, and full of provisions for an army."

At Bourges they were stopped by the strength of the place; having no means of besieging a fortified town. They passed on, and came to another town, the name of

which Froissart does not give, but which, he says, had great plenty of wines and provisions. This they carried by storm, and here they remained three days.

And now tidings were brought to the prince that the king of France was at Chartres with a large army, and that all the passes and towns on the north of the Loire were manned and well defended. He therefore held a council of war, in which it was resolved to return at once to Bourdeaux, doing the enemy what damage was possible on the road. But the castle of Romorontin delayed their retreat, the prince making it a point of honour not to be foiled by so small a place, and wasting therefore three days before it. This delay enabled the French army to reach him. The king of France, having now a large force, had set forward from Chartres, had crossed the Loire at Blois, and was rapidly marching on the city of Poictiers. Both of the chiefs seem to have been in the dark as to the exact position of the other—John imagining the English to be far before him, and Edward similarly deeming the French to be in his rear. At last, at Chauvigny, on the Vienne, the two armies came in sight of each other, or rather, learned each other's proximity by an encounter of outposts. A party of French knights falling in with two of Edward's captains and a party of sixty men, pursued them until they came to the main body of the English, and here, not retreating, the greater part of the assailants were either slain or captured. From the prisoners, the prince learned that the king of France was close by with his army, and that he could not retreat without fighting him. He called in immediately all foragers; and ordered every man to keep under his standard. Four experienced captains, with two hundred horse, were

sent out to reconnoitre the French positions. They were not long before they fell in with it, and captured some stragglers. They soon perceived the whole plain to be covered with troops. Their approach alarmed the French, who, instead of entering Poictiers, turned towards the English army, and, as it was late, encamped for the night in the open fields. The English detachment returned to the prince, and told him that the French "were in immense numbers." The prince replied, "God help us! we must begin to consider how we can best receive them."

The next day was Sunday. The French king ordered a solemn mass in his pavilion, and he and his four sons communicated. There then assembled around him the great lords, the Duke of Orleans, the Duke of Bourbon, the Earl of Ponthieu, the Constable of France, the Marshal of France, and a great body of lords and famous knights. They were long debating; at last it was resolved "that each lord should display his banner, advance into the plain, and push forward in the name of God and St. Denis." It is already tolerably clear, that this great army had *no general.*

"Then might be seen all the nobility of France, richly dressed out in shining armour, with banners and pennons gallantly displayed; for all the flower of the French nobility was there." By the advice of the Constable and marshals, the army was divided into three battalions, each consisting of sixteen thousand men-at-arms. Nearly fifty thousand spears then, a large proportion doubtless mounted, were arrayed against two thousand English lances, and four thousand archers, with a few irregulars. Michelet says: "There were the king's four sons, twenty-six dukes or counts, and a hundred

and forty knights-bannerets—a magnificent spectacle; but the army was none the better for all that."

The king sent forward three knights to reconnoitre the English array. They returned, and Sir Eustace Ribeaumont said, "Sir, we have examined the English closely; they amount, according to our estimate, to about two thousand men-at-arms, four thousand archers, and fifteen hundred footmen. They are posted very strongly; and have fortified their position as well as they can. They are on a hill, which is only approachable by one road or lane; so narrow that only four men can ride abreast."

The French were now on the point of moving forward to the attack, when the Cardinal de Perigord came up at a full gallop, and making a low reverence, entreated the king to listen to him a moment. "You have here," he said, "all the flower of your kingdom against a mere handful of English; you may have them on other terms than by a battle. Let me go to the prince, and remonstrate with him on the dangerous situation he is in." The king said, "It is very agreeable to us; but make haste back again."

The cardinal set off at full speed; and was admitted to the prince, whom he found on foot in the midst of his army. He said, "Fair son, if you have well considered the great army of the King of France, you will allow me to make up matters between you, if I possibly can." The prince said, "Sir, save my own honour, and that of my army, and I will agree to any reasonable terms." The cardinal then returned to the French camp, and saw the king; and all that day he rode from one army to the other, trying to bring about an agreement. Many proposals were made: the prince offered to give

up all the towns and castles which he had taken; to release all his prisoners without ransom; and to engage not to take up arms against the King of France for the next seven years." But John refused the offer; demanding that Edward, with an hundred of his knights, should surrender themselves prisoners. "The prince and his army," says Froissart, "disdained to accept any such conditions." Another account says, that Edward exclaimed, "England shall never have to pay a ransom for me!"

Thus Sunday was spent; and the battle was necessarily deferred till the morrow. The English, however, had well employed their time in still further strengthening their positions. But they were short of provisions; and could the French have stooped to defer the attack, and to be content with cutting off all supplies, Edward and his whole force must have submitted themselves before the termination of another week. But such a course would have been humbling to the pride of France. A certain triumph seemed in the power of the French commanders, and they could brook no delay.

Edward, therefore, made up his mind for a struggle for life or liberty on the Monday morning. He remained on the defensive; except that he detached a body of three hundred men-at-arms, and as many archers, with orders to make a circuit, and get into the flank and rear of the Duke of Normandy's battalion; the position of which he could survey from his hill.

"And now," says Froissart, "the whole army of the prince, including every one, did not amount to more than eight thousand; while the French had upwards of sixty thousand combatants, among whom were more

than three thousand knights. The prince, seeing all hope of an accommodation at an end, addressed his captains and men, saying:—

"Now, my gallant fellows! what though we be but a small body when compared with our enemies; let us not be cast down on that account; for victory is not always with the greater numbers, but God gives it to whom he pleases. If the day shall be ours, great will be the honour of it: if not, I have a father, and you all have friends, who will be sure to avenge our deaths. Stand fast, therefore, and fight like men; and if it please God, you shall see me play the part of a true knight."

And now came on the French, and soon it was seen that here, as in many other battles of the time, the English bow was a most formidable weapon. The battalion of the French marshals entered the lane by which the English position must be approached; and now the archers began to ply their weapons "in such sort that the horses, smarting under the pain of their wounds, would not advance, but turned about, threw their masters, and created a general confusion. And if a few of the French struggled through and came in sight of the prince's battalion, a small party or two of English knights, who waited for them, instantly attacked them and slew them, or made them prisoners.

Thus, in a short time, this battalion of the marshals was defeated. The front line was driven back in confusion on the division immediately behind it. This, unable to advance, began to give ground, impelled by the crowd of fugitives pressing back upon it. But in retreating, this battalion fell back upon the Duke of Normandy's, and soon confusion and terror spread through

the whole army. The detachment which the prince had placed over-night on the flank and rear of the Duke of Normandy's battalion, now came forth from their ambuscade, and fell vehemently upon the already disordered ranks of the French; "and, in truth," says Froissart, "the English archers shot so thickly and so well, that the French did not know which way to turn themselves to avoid the arrows." And now, this battalion, which was broad enough in the front, grew thin and scanty in the rear, for the news of the repulse of the marshals had spread, and the men began to escape in crowds. Meanwhile the English on the hill perceiving that the first battalion was beaten, and that the Duke of Normandy's was in great disorder, gave the word, and the knights and men-at-arms were in a moment in their saddles.

"The day is ours," said Sir John Chandos, and, giving a shout, the two thousand horse pushed down the hill, charging with vehemence the disordered battalia.

"Let us make for the king himself," said Sir John to the prince, "for I know that he will not fly, and we shall have him—if it please God."

And now the battle grew hot; the French were so numerous, and in such disorder, that it was an arduous task that still remained. Edward charged the division of the Duke of Athens, broke it, and drove it before him. Then the battalion of Germans, under the Count of Salzburg, which was soon overthrown and put to flight. Meanwhile "the English archers, advancing with the cavalry, shot so well that none dared to stay within their reach."

And now three of the king's sons, the Duke of Nor

mandy, the Earl of Poictiers, and the Earl of Touraine, with eight hundred lances which had never put spear in rest, took flight and rode off the field.

The king himself stood firm. "If one fourth of his soldiers," says Froissart, "had behaved as well as he did, the day would have been his own." Again he says, "King John himself did wonders, he fought with a battle-axe, with which he defended himself bravely." The English knew the value of such a prize, and they directed their chief efforts to his capture. The Earl of Tancarville was made prisoner close to him, as were the Earl of Ponthieu, and the Earl of Eu. A little further on, the Lord Charles d'Artois and many other knights were captured by the flank attack. "The English and Gascons poured so fast upon the king's division that they broke all its ranks," and now the last show of order was lost, and the whole field was one confused mass. Every one was pressing forwards, eager to seize the king: at last a young French knight, who had been banished and had entered the English service, entreated the king to surrender or he would lose his life. "To whom am I to surrender?" said John, "where is my cousin the Prince of Wales? Who are you?" "I am Denis de Morbeque, knight of Artois," said the Frenchman, "surrender yourself to me and I will lead you to the prince." "Well," said the king, giving him his glove, "I surrender myself to you."

Sir John Chandos, who had remained by the prince's side all the day, had now advised him to raise his banner on an elevated point, and to pitch his tent, for there was no longer any French army in sight. Accordingly, the banner was raised, a small pavilion was pitched, wine was brought, the prince took off his helmet, and the

trumpets began to sound. But now the prince addressed the Earl of Warwick and Lord Cobham, saying, "I pray you to mount your horses, and ride over the field, that I may know, if possible, what has become of the king." These two lords immediately rode forth, and they soon perceived a great crowd of knights and men at arms, all striving with great noise. More than ten knights were loudly claiming the honour of having taken the king. "The two lords then pushed through the crowd by main force, and ordered all to stand aside. They commanded, in the prince's name, all to keep their distance, on pain of death. They then, dismounting, approached the king with profound reverences, and conducted him peaceably to the Prince of Wales." Edward received the king with a low obeisance, and comforted him as well as he was able, ordering wines and refreshments to be brought, which he presented to the king with his own hand. "In the evening a supper was spread in the prince's pavilion; and the king, his son Philip, with Bourbon, Artois, the earls of Tancarville, Estampes, Granville, and others, were seated at an elevated table, while the prince served the king with his own hands. The French princes, struck with Edward's courtesy, declared that he would be one of the most gallant knights in Christendom, if it pleased God to grant him life."

Meanwhile, the English horse continued its pursuit of the fugitives, up to the very gates of Poictiers. "There was such an horrible spectacle of men slaughtered and trampled down, as it is wonderful to think of. The frightened French, in crowds, surrendered the moment they caught sight of an Englishman."

The report now given in to the prince, showed that

the king and one of his sons, and seventeen earls, besides a great number of barons and knights, were prisoners; and that from five to six thousand lay dead on the field.* But the victors were troubled what to do with the crowds of captives of all ranks, who were *twice as numerous as themselves.* They concluded, at last, to ransom them on the spot, and even to take the pledges of those who had no money. As for the booty, it was immense; "there being quantities of gold and silver plate, rich jewels, and trunks full of gold and silver ornaments. As to fine armour, that was in such abundance as to be little regarded."

The prince and his little army, now undisturbed, continued their march, and in a few days passed the Garonne, and arrived safely at Bourdeaux. "Great was the dismay at Paris, when the fugitives brought word that there was no longer a king nor barons in France, but all were killed or taken."

England, very naturally, rejoiced through all her coasts. The prince, after a short stay, embarked for England with his illustrious prisoner, to whom, for greater ease and comfort, he assigned a separate vessel. He entered London with knightly courtesy, riding a small black horse, while the King of France, royally

* In the Register of the Convent of the Friars Minors in Poictiers, there appear the names of the knights and great men buried there after this battle. Among these we find, the Constable of France, the Bishop of Chalons, the Viscount de Chauvigny, the lords of Mailly, of Rademonde, of Rochecheruire, of Chaumont, of Hes, of Corbon, and a great number of knights. In the church of the Frères Prescheurs there were buried the Duke of Bourbon, the Marshal de Clermont, the Viscount de Rochechouart, the Lord de la Fayette, the Viscount d'Aumale, the Lord St. Gildart, and more than fifty knights.

mounted on a white charger, rode by his side. The palace of the Savoy was made the residence of the captive monarch, and there king Edward and his queen frequently visited him. John, however, was long detained in England, the enormous sum of three millions of gold crowns being demanded from France for his ransom. He finally consented to these hard terms; but on returning to his own kingdom, he found so much difficulty in persuading his people to raise this great ransom, that he finally resolved to return to his prison in Westminster. As true as he was brave, he nobly answered his council, who tried to persuade him to be guilty of a breach of his engagement, that "if honour were banished from every other abode, it ought at least to find a home in the breast of kings." He returned to his home in the Savoy; where, a few months after, he died. Edward III. ordered his obsequies to be performed with royal magnificence, and sent his corpse with a splendid retinue to France, where it found a place in the burial-place of the kings, in the abbey-church of St. Denis.

VI.

AGINCOURT.

A.D. 1415.

We now come, in the natural course of events, to the third of those three wonderful battles gained by the English in France, within the space of seventy years, each of which was marked by the same characteristics; namely, on the part of the English commanders indefensible ambition, a reckless spirit, plunging them into positions of extreme peril, and a cool and determined valour, extricating them from the perils in which they were involved; and on the part of the French, the collection of vast and unmanageable bodies of troops, without any experienced commander;—a self-confident reliance on mere numbers, and an utter helplessness, incompetence, and consequent defeat, when the moment of encounter took place.

Henry V. had seen his father seize upon the crown of England wrongfully, and had succeeded to his throne without any apparent compunction. He now found France in circumstances of the greatest difficulty, and he thought himself justified in taking advantage of her distresses. The poor king, Charles VI., was often deranged, and at all times mentally incompetent. Intrigues and factions abounded on all sides. Each of the princes aimed at the supreme authority, and anarchy spread over the whole face of the realm.

Henry seems to have been not only emulous of the fame of his ancestor, Edward III., but anxious, also, like most men who are conscious of a flaw in their own titles, to turn the public attention another way. He determined to renew the groundless claims advanced by the third Edward to the crown of France. The French, in their distracted condition, felt it necessary to meet him by negotiation. He then offered to wait for the remainder of the French king's life, provided a daughter of France were given to him, with two millions of gold crowns. The French offered eight hundred thousand, whereupon Henry required that this sum should instantly be paid down. But he expected and prepared for war. The young Dauphin is said to have sent him a derisive present of tennis-balls, in allusion to the gaieties of his youth. The king sent the giver word, that the tennis-balls which he would return him would be such as would knock all Paris about his ears.

On the 11th of August, 1415, the forces which had long been in preparation embarked at Southampton, on board a flotilla of fourteen hundred vessels. The whole force is described by some writers as having consisted of thirty thousand men. But actual records still extant give us an account of two thousand five hundred men at arms, four thousand mounted archers, four thousand on foot, and one thousand other soldiers, as gunners, miners, and the like. As each knight would have two or three attendants, and each man at arms one, we may easily raise the total force to about the thirty thousand described.

On the 13th the fleet approached Harfleur, and on the 14th the landing commenced. Michelet says, "The expedition had been well designed, and extremely well

prepared. The point of disembarkation, too, was well chosen. Harfleur, had it become an English town, would have kept the Seine always open to the English to pass in and out to Rouen, Paris, and all France."

On the 18th of August Harfleur was invested, but it took five weeks to reduce that strong place. "In this siege the English army," says Michelet, "suffered exceedingly. Dysentery broke out in the camp, and carried off thousands." This of itself explains the greatly reduced numbers which we subsequently find under Henry's standard.

On the 22nd of September, 1415, the garrison of Harfleur surrendered at discretion. The king received the keys, seated in a splendid tent, his nobles, in brilliant array, standing around him. But Harfleur had done its duty to France. Of the English army multitudes had perished, and of the remainder five thousand needed now to be sent home, sick or wounded. Leaving twelve hundred men to garrison this important place, the king found that not ten thousand men remained to follow his banner.* A council of war was held to decide what should be done. The Duke of Clarence recommended an immediate re-embarkation for England. But, although Harfleur had been taken, this sudden retreat from France seemed to Edward's mind to bear the character of defeat. He preferred, therefore, to march deliberately through Normandy, which he claimed as his own, and to make his embarkation from his own port of Calais.

* The chronicler in the Sloane MSS. says, nine hundred men at arms, and five thousand archers: another chronicler in the Harleian collection, says eight hundred men at arms, and eight thousand archers: another, in St. Peter's College, Camb., says, seven thousand fighting men. Harding's Chronicle, nine thousand men.

"This march of one hundred miles," says Mr. Turner, "was a deliberate challenge to all France, to come forth and fight his small, sick, and suffering army. No fabled hero of romance ever tempted destruction more wilfully, or achieved a more extraordinary adventure. It was a march of the most calm, deliberate, and self-devoted heroism that history has recorded."

Henry wasted eight days in messages of negociation to the French rulers, and in an absurd challenge to the dauphin, to decide the question by single combat. At last, on the 9th of October he commenced his march. And we are happy to observe the rapid progress of civilization which is exhibited in his command, that no soldier, on pain of death, should ravage or burn, or take anything by force.

A century of chivalrous thoughts and deeds, had done something to humanize the warriors of Europe. In 1296, before Edward I. entered Scotland, he found that the Scotch had broken into Cumberland, destroying everything with fire and sword; slaying old and young. When Wallace, in the following year, broke into the northern counties, "he swept across the land," says Sir Walter Scott, "from Newcastle to Carlisle, *leaving nothing behind him but blood and ashes.*" But when the Black Prince ravaged France in 1356, he plundered and destroyed, but slew none. Wealthy men he captured, with a view to their ransom. Now, however, another half century has passed, and we find Henry V. while marching through France, forbidding plunder, and inflicting punishments on his soldiers for acts of rapine. So greatly had civilization advanced, in these important respects.

On the 10th of October, Henry reached Archies, where

he obtained a supply of bread and wine. On the 12th he passed by Eu, where a French sortie compelled him to halt, and where he also obtained some provisions. On the 13th he approached the Somme, intending to cross by the fords of Blanchetaque, as Edward III. had done, before Crecy. But news was brought, that a large army of the French was on the opposite side, and that to force a passage with seven or eight thousand men was impossible. Disheartened by this disappointment, the English pursued their march up the Somme: their prospects appeared to grow darker day by day. At last, on the 19th of October, being near Denesle, the king obtained the all-important information, that close by there was a ford which was practicable. The French happily had forgotten this passage, and in twelve hours the whole English army was quietly transported to the right bank of the river.

During all these days the French had not been idle. Summonses had been flying through all parts of the kingdom, and men at arms of all ranks were now thronging every road which led to Normandy.

"At Rouen," says a French historian,* "the king assembled an army at the beginning of October capable of conquering the best disciplined forces. He had more than fourteen thousand men at arms, commanded by distinguished leaders, many of whom were of the blood royal. There were nearly all the bravest knights in France, who longed to revenge the injuries they had received from the English."

Three heralds were now sent to Henry, by the Dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, to announce to him that they

* Laboureur.

meant to give him battle before he reached Calais. He heard them with unruffled countenance, and merely remarked, "The event, then, must be as it pleases God."

"They asked him," says Michelet, "to name a day and place for the battle, and to state what road he intended to take. The English king replied with dignified simplicity, that he was going straight to Calais, that he should enter no town; but, with God's help, should always be found in the open field. He added, "If our enemies attempt to obstruct us, they shall not do it without experiencing some mischief and danger. We shall not seek them, but neither will we avoid them. We recommend them not to stop our way, if they wish to avoid the shedding of much Christian blood."

At last, on the 24th of October, having passed Blangy, the English began to approach the French army, which was drawn up at Agincourt, intercepting their road to Calais. It filled a spacious plain, and seemed innumerable. A Welsh captain, David Gam, who had reconnoitred them, reported, that "there were enough to be killed, enough to be taken prisoners, and enough to run away." The estimates of so large an army, suddenly assembled, naturally differ; but of ten English accounts, two state the French at sixty thousand, and the remaining eight make them one hundred thousand and more. Of the French writers, Monstrelet makes them one hundred and fifty thousand, and St. Remy, "full fifty thousand." If we adopt the smallest number, the French were still fully six times as numerous as the English. Yet, when an English knight murmured a wish that the king had about ten thousand of the archers who were then reposing in England, the king exclaimed—"Not

one man more! If God gives us the victory, he can do it by many or by few. If not, the fewer we are, the less will be our country's loss. No! not one man more."

The English spent the night in commending themselves to God, and in completing their preparations. They had learnt that the French commanders, dreading the English archers, had resolved to ride them down by squadrons of heavy horse. Each archer, therefore, was provided with a strong pointed stake, which he was instructed to drive into the ground, when he took up his position, in such a way that horsemen charging the line should necessarily be "staked."

We will now copy from Michelet, a modern French historian.

"It was otherwise on the French side, where the time was spent in making knights. In every direction there were great fires, which revealed everything to the enemy; a confused din of people shouting and calling to each other; a bustling mob of valets and pages. Many knights passed the night on horseback to avoid soiling their armour in the mud; a cold rain chilled them; even the very horses were low-spirited.

"In the morning the ground was in so bad a condition that no one was disposed to attack. The two armies formed a strange contrast. On the French side were three enormous squadrons, like so many forests of lances; at their head the Constable, the Princes, the Dukes of Orleans, Bar, and Alençon, the Counts of Nevers, Eu, Richemont, and Vendôme, a multitude of lords, dazzling in enamelled armour, the horses shining in steel and gold. The English army did not look so handsomely. The archers had no armour, often no

shoes; for head-pieces they had sorry caps of leather; the axes and hatchets in their girdles made them look like carpenters.

"It is a strange, incredible, and yet certain fact, that the French army could not stir either to fight or fly. The rear alone escaped. The big war-horses, loaded with their heavy riders, and their steel caparisons, sank at every step deep in the stiff soil. They were also so crowded together that they could scarcely lift their arms to strike an enemy. The French were drawn up thirty-two deep, the English in only four ranks. But of the French, the majority never even saw their enemy.

"Against these masses the English discharged thousands of arrows; then from the two wings of the French army came forth the iron-clad squadrons destined to destroy the English archers. One squadron advanced on either flank, but neither of them ever reached the English lines. Of the twelve hundred men who made this charge, not more than one hundred and twenty remained when they came to the English stakes, the rest had fallen or sunk in the mud by the way. Those who came as far as the stakes, fell upon them, or were shot as they neared the bowmen. The wounded men and horses galloped back upon the French lines; but these were closely packed together, and could not receive them. Thus, in that dense mass, the horses, wild with terror, flung off their riders, or crushed them under their armour as they fell. Then came the English, pressing on their rear, to complete the havoc. Advancing with axes, spears, and heavy swords, they fell upon that confused heap of men and horses. After awhile they cleared and drove off the field the first line, or vanguard, and came to the second line of the French army; and

here the contest commenced in good earnest. The king led the attack, and now eighteen French knights made a combined onset upon him. They had sworn to die or bring down his crown—they all perished in the attempt.

"The second line, after a fierce and hand to hand engagement was broken up, and there remained but the rear guard, which soon dispersed." The field was now Henry's, for the whole order of the French line of battle was destroyed, and nothing remained but an enormous mass of fugitives. Pressed from behind, and filled with a panic of consternation, the whole vast mass dissolved itself, and fled from the field.

We have chiefly followed the narrative of Michelet, who will not be suspected of doing injustice to the French. We now turn to the narrative of an eye-witness,—a priest who accompanied the English army; and who describes what passed under his own eyes.* As gunpowder was then seldom used, and not much smoke would obscure the field, and as Henry's army was so small as to cover but a small space, this narrative of a mere observer, who himself watched the battle without taking any part in it, evidently has a more than ordinary value.

The writer begins with the 7th of August, and describes the king's embarkation, and his landing in France. It narrates the siege of Harfleur, and the subsequent march. He distinctly states, that after sending home five thousand sick, and leaving twelve hundred to garrison Harfleur, the king had not with him more than nine hundred lances, and five thousand archers. He then follows the army on its march, till, on the 24th,

* This MS. is in the Cottonian Collection, Brit. Museum (Julius E. iv).

the French army came in sight, "in multitudes compared with us—filling a very wide field; a moderate-sized valley being between us and them." He then describes the manœuvres of the French, endeavouring to take the English in the flank or rear, and Henry's care "continually to take a position opposite to them." "At last," he says, "sunset overtook us, and the French retired."

He then describes the night, the continual shouting and clamour of the French army; and the silence, commanded by Henry, of the English. He adds, "It is said, they reckoned themselves so sure of us, that our king and his nobles were that night played for at dice."

"On the morrow, the French took up their position in terrific numbers in the plain named Agincourt, through which lay our road to Calais. They planted at each wing of their van-guard a large body of horse, who were to break up the line and strength of our archers. Their van was a forest of lances, multitudes of helmets shining among them, and their cavalry being, it was computed, thirty times greater than all ours.* Our king, meanwhile, having prayed to God, formed his line of battle; his right wing being commanded by the Duke of York, and the left, by Lord Camoys; the archers, in the form of a wedge, in the centre, each man of whom was instructed to drive his stake into the ground before him, so as to receive the enemy's horse on its point."

"But now," he continues, "the enemy kept at a distance from us, fearful of approaching. And when a

* This is an exaggeration, the number of Henry's men at arms being nine hundred, while in the French army, according to Laboureur, there were fourteen thousand.

great part of the day had been spent in thus waiting, both armies standing gazing on each other, the king determined to advance against them; seeing they stood across our line of march.*

"And now, coming within reach of the enemy, the horsemen of the French army, posted on the flanks, began to attack our archers on both wings. But they were quickly compelled to retreat, amidst showers of arrows."

(Here St. Remi enlarges the account in the following terms: "The Constable of the French formed a body of from one thousand to twelve hundred men-at-arms, part on one wing, and part on the other, with a view of breaking the English archers. But when they came near to them, there remained no more than eight score lances. And by their horses falling on the stakes many were killed; and the rest retreated upon the French advanced guard, in which they caused great confusion, breaking it in various places, their horses wounded with arrows, being quite unmanageable." And the Memoir of Count de Richemont says, "There were a great number of cavalry on our side, who ought to have attacked the English; but when they felt the arrows come so thick upon them, they took to flight, and broke our line in such a manner that it could scarcely be formed again before the English were upon us.")

* That the French, notwithstanding their numbers, showed no disposition to begin the attack, is admitted by the French chroniclers. Thus St. Remi says, "When the English saw that the French did not approach, they marched slowly towards them in very fine order." Michelet, however, who, in our own day, writes the history, is silent on this point, which evidently is not much to the honour of the French.

Resuming the narrative of the eye-witness—he thus continues:—"The French cross-bowmen, who were on the flanks, after one hasty discharge, which killed very few, retreated from the fear of our archers. And now the men at arms on each side had nearly reached each other, when the French nobles, who at first approached in full front, divided themselves into three troops, charging our lines in the three places where the banners were."

(It is clear that the eye-witness here mistakes the desperate charge of a few valiant men, for a military manœuvre. The French chroniclers admit that the first line was broken. St. Remi says, "Thus the advanced guard (or first line) being thrown into disorder, the men at arms fell without number, and their horses took to flight; and even numerous parties of the French fled." "The English cutting right and left, made their way to the second line, and pushed within it, with the king of England and his followers.")

"And now," continues the eye-witness, "the battle raged very fiercely. So great was the pressure of the multitude behind, that the living fell over the dead. So vast grew the heaps of the slain, that our people had to mount upon them, and to slay the adversaries beneath with swords, axes, and other weapons. And at length, in two or three hours, the front battle was broken, and the enemy driven to flight, and our men began to separate the living from the dead, and to secure their prisoners."

It is clear that it was with the second line only that any serious struggle took place, and that this struggle was an earnest one. St. Remi says, "In consequence of the (fugitive) horsemen, the French line was broken.

Then the English charged the French with great force, overthrowing the first two lines, and killing and destroying without mercy. Then all the rear-guard, still mounted, seeing the fate of the first two lines, took to flight."

Laboureur, another French historian, says, "The arrows threw the horsemen into disorder; they fled with precipitation, carrying terror and fear to the main body. Then the necessity of conquering or dying, inspired the English with as much fury as courage; and they pierced our line in so many places, that it was effectually broken. Then the French nobility found themselves in the utmost danger, without the power of resistance; they were obliged to yield themselves victims to the lowest of the soldiery. O eternal reproach! O ever-deplorable disaster!"

But now occurred a lamentable error. "A clamour arose," says the eye-witness, "that a body of the enemy's cavalry, repairing its ranks, was coming down upon us, so few and so wearied. And immediately the prisoners, with a few illustrious exceptions, were put to the sword, lest they should be ruin to us in the coming battle." It is pleasing to observe, that all the French writers, noticing this incident, admit that it arose from a mistake; a body of the broken French horse showing a disposition to renew the battle.

But the French army was utterly routed; and the defeat was irrecoverable, seeing that all their leaders were either slain or captured. Monstrelet thus recounts the names of those who had fallen, or been taken prisoners. "The Constable of France; the Marshal Bouciqualt; the Admiral of France; the Master of the Cross-bows; the Master of the King's Household; the

Duke of Brabant; the Duke of Bar; the Duke of Alençon; the Count de Nevers; the Count de Maile; the Count de Vaudemont; the Count de Blaumont; the Count de Grandpre; the Count de Roussy; the Count de Fauquemburg; Mons. Louis de Bourbon; and lords without number." The banners of one hundred and twenty French peers were taken. The loss of the French is generally computed at about ten or eleven thousand; the loss of the English was sixteen hundred. That number, at least, is stated by the French historians. By some English writers of the time it was reduced to one or two hundred; but this, in a fierce engagement of two or three hours, is hardly credible. Probably the French estimate may somewhat exceed the truth. Hall, an English chronicler of a century after, ridiculing the stories of twenty-five or one hundred slain, says, "Other writers, whom I sooner believe, affirm that there were slain above five or six hundred." Probably the truth would be, rather below one thousand, which is a large number, out of only six or seven thousand men.

Of the French prisoners, Michelet says, "A whole colony was transported to England. It might have been said, 'If you want to see France, go to London.'"

Henry returned that night to Maisoncelles, where he had rested the previous night, and on the following day proceeded to Calais. When he landed at Dover, the enthusiasm of the people knew no bounds. They rushed into the sea, took him in their arms, and carried him to land. All London went out to meet him, holding such a day of rejoicing as was scarcely ever paralleled.

Agincourt gave one more signal proof of the helplessness of an army without a competent commander. At Crecy, at Poictiers, and here, immense bodies of men

were assembled together by the French, merely to be slaughtered. Vast is the blind insensate power deposited in a great army; but except it be directed by a commensurate skill and talent, it is only like a powerful steam locomotive engine under the control of a child or an idiot. It rushes to its ruin.

Henry's generalship is sufficiently manifested by the single fact, that he so manœuvred his little army, that his flanks were secure, and his powerful foes could only attack him with a front equal to his own. It has been well observed, that "battles are decided, not by the number of troops in the field, but by the number *actually engaged.*" Useless masses which cannot be brought into action often only increase the disorder.

The English bow and arrow was here, once more, the deciding element in the contest. The French dreaded the English archers, and had specially provided for their destruction. But the very means which they took, failing, only increased the disorder. Their cavalry, especially detached to break and ride down the bowmen, were themselves thrown into disorder by the arrows which "flew like snow;" and either fell in the charge or returned to disturb and weaken their own array. Nothing can show more convincingly the power of a well-trained infantry of marksmen, than the principal English victories of these two centuries. Almost every one, from Falkirk to Agincourt, was gained by the English archers.

Of this remarkable battle we must say, as we said of Crecy and Poictiers, that, in spite of its "glory," it was a battle which ought never to have been fought. All these battles were acts of aggressive warfare. They occurred in the course of unjustifiable invasions. They

were the "splendid achievements" of a war in which Edward I., "slowe to strife," would never have engaged. This last, as it was deemed the most "glorious," so was it also the most unjustifiable. Crecy and Poictiers, though occurring in the course of an indefensible war, were yet, in themselves, *necessary*. The English commanders were forced to fight, to extricate themselves from positions of the most extreme peril. In the case of Agincourt, the same necessity did not exist. Mr. Sharon Turner justly says—

"The laurel of Agincourt was the prize of temerity without necessity: of a chivalrous defiance of danger, too much like ostentatious confidence to be safely commended. It was won, not only against calculation, but against all reasonable hope."

VII.

BLENHEIM.

A. D. 1704.

NEARLY three centuries had passed away since the decisive day of Agincourt; and both England and France had expanded alike in dimensions and in actual power. The British isles were now really one kingdom; and the days of Elizabeth and of Cromwell had shown, that the spirit which had been exhibited at Creey still survived. But France had made still greater advances. In the days of our Plantagenets, the French kings reigned over a realm consisting merely of some of the central districts of France. The great province of Guienne, with Gascony and Bordeaux, belonged to England. Brittany had its duke; Burgundy, Poiteau, and Provence had their several rulers. But gradually, one after another, these provinces were absorbed into the kingdom of France. Guienne was taken from England during the wretched reign of Henry VI. Burgundy was acquired in 1482; Bretagne, or Brittany, in 1493; Alsace fell to France in 1648, Roussillon in 1659, Franche Comte in 1678. And thus, in the days of the "Grande Monarque," Louis XIV., almost the entire territory which we now term France, was united under the sovereignty of the French king.

It is therefore in no way surprising, to those who have at all studied human nature, that the ruler of this aug-

mented and united France should indulge in arrogance and high-mindedness; or that he should readily entertain projects of ambition. Macaulay thus describes him, at the period on which we are now entering:—

"Louis already meditated gigantic designs, which were destined to keep Europe in constant fermentation during many years. He wished to humble the United Provinces, and to annex Belgium and Lorraine to his dominions. Nor was this all. The King of Spain was a sickly child. It was likely that he would die without issue. His eldest sister was Queen of France. Thus a day would almost certainly come, and might come very soon, when the House of Bourbon might lay claim to that vast empire "on which the sun never set."

But Louis XIV. was something more than an ambitious man. In the latter part of his life he became a persecuting bigot. He did his best to root out Protestantism from France; and he nearly succeeded. He became, from his power and his relentless zeal, the head and representative of the Papal party in Europe. In this capacity, he wished to restore the Stuarts to the throne of England, as a means of re-establishing Popery in these islands. Thus he and William III., who similarly represented and led the councils of Protestantism, became natural and irreconcilable foes. For many successive years, the whole energies of these two leading sovereigns were directed to the counteracting and weakening of each other.

The people of England and of Europe could not behold this strife without being interested in it. Thus, our historian says, "The fear and hatred inspired by the greatness, the injustice, and the arrogance of the French king were at the height. His neighbours might well doubt whether it were more dangerous to be at

war or at peace with him." On the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, "one cry of grief and rage rose from the whole of Protestant Europe.*"

Meanwhile, the English king seemed to have been especially raised up to counterwork and oppose his plans. In sympathy with his efforts, and in expression of their hatred of the French king, in 1690, on William's return to England, "a waxen figure, doubtless a hideous caricature of the most majestic of princes, was dragged about Westminster in a chariot. Above it was inscribed, in large letters, 'Lewis, the greatest tyrant of the fourteen.' After a procession, the image was committed to the flames, with loud huzzas, in the middle of Covent Garden."

Louis, however, was not behind the English mob in their mutual abhorrence. Two years after, he prepared a new "Armada" for the invasion of England. Eighty ships of the line, and three hundred transports, were prepared for the conveyance of a French army, commanded by a marshal of France, to the shores of England. At La Hogue, on the 19th of May 1692, they were met, and sixteen French men-of-war, all noble vessels, eight of them three-deckers, were destroyed, and the expedition utterly frustrated.

Such being the mutual animosities of France and England, we find without any surprise, that throughout all William's reign, and the greater part of that of Anne, continual confederacies were formed against France, of which England was generally the chief promoter. The "Alliance" which gave rise to the events of which we are about to speak, was formed at the Hague, on the 7th of September, 1701, in the last year of King William's

* Macaulay, vol. ii. p. 16.

life. The parties to it were, the Emperor of Germany, the King of England, and the States-General of Holland. Its chief object was declared to be, to prevent the aggrandisement of France by the addition of Spain and the Spanish Netherlands to that already powerful kingdom.

King William III. died in the following March, and Queen Anne immediately succeeded him. The new queen soon wrote to the States-General, to announce her intention to maintain the late king's alliances; and the Duke of Marlborough, as ambassador extraordinary, reached the Hague with this intimation on the 28th of March 1702. He was received with great enthusiasm; and it was presently arranged by the three Powers that war should be immediately declared, and that the duke should be appointed commander-in-chief of the allied forces. Marlborough then returned to London to take his part in public affairs; but he embarked to join the army in Flanders on the 26th of May. But the allied forces were not in a state of preparation for a campaign until the end of July, when the Maes was crossed and Venloo invested. The duke's object was to bring on an action with the French army; but, from some slowness on the part of the Dutch commanders, the enemy was allowed to escape, to Marlborough's great vexation. Venloo was invested; and the bombardment commenced on the 7th of September; and on the 23rd the garrison capitulated. Landau was captured a few days previous by the troops of the emperor. On the 20th of October Liege was taken; and with that achievement the campaign closed.

The Duke of Marlborough, like his more than equal in our own day, was as great a general in the council-

chamber as in the field. Coupled, like Wellington in 1809–13, with timorous, distrustful, and unworthy allies, any mere manœuvrer of troops would have utterly failed. His calmness, his excellent temper, and his skill in persuasion, were as essential to success as his knowledge of war, and his power of handling great masses on the field of battle.

The year which next followed, 1703, was wasted in perplexing and disgusting differences with the Dutch commanders, who so continually thwarted Marlborough's plans as to drive him to a resolution, at the end of that year's campaign, of resigning the command. But an alteration in the French operations removed the war to another part of the Continent, and gave scope to new plans and purposes, to which the duke hastened to give effect. The French had resolved, in conjunction with the Elector of Bavaria, to make a fierce and powerful attack on the Emperor, so as to bring him to submission, and to force him to relinquish his alliance with England and the United Provinces. The Elector of Bavaria collected about forty-five thousand men in the vicinity of Ulm; and Marshal Tallard was ordered to join him with a French force of equal amount early in the approaching summer. Meanwhile the emperor was so ill prepared to meet such an attack, that to save him from ruin, and the confederation from dissolution, seemed Marlborough's first duty.

By consummate statesmanship the duke succeeded, in the course of the spring of 1704, in bringing both the English government, and the tardy and over-cautious Dutch, into his plans. He was thus enabled by Midsummer to draw together, in the neighbourhood of Ulm on the Danube, a force which, when reinforced by Prince

Eugene, amounted to about fifty thousand men. The combined forces of the elector and the French marshal, when the day of conflict arrived, considerably exceeded this number; but at the commencement of the campaign Marshal Tallard had not joined the elector, nor had Eugene arrived to the aid of the duke. The first encounter, therefore, took place between the English and the Bavarians on the 2nd of July, 1704, when an attempt of the elector to seize the commanding position of the Schellenberg, near Donawert, on the Danube, was defeated with great loss. The Bavarian division, under General d'Arco, was about twelve thousand five hundred strong. This was utterly routed and broken up, with the loss of sixteen pieces of cannon; and not three thousand of the whole division ever rejoined the elector. The loss of the allies was sixteen hundred killed and four thousand wounded. Such was the precursor of the more famous battle of Blenheim.

This check was severely felt by the elector, who deeply grieved over the loss of some of his finest troops; but he was comforted by the assurance that the French reinforcements, of at least thirty-five thousand men, would soon join him and enable him to take vengeance on his antagonist. While, however, this force approached the elector on the one side, Prince Eugene, with eighteen thousand of the imperial troops, was advancing towards Marlborough on the other. The imperial troops began to come into communication with the English on the 10th and 11th of August.

On the 13th of August, 1704, then, Marlborough and Prince Eugene, now acting in concert, approached the Franco-Bavarian army. The Anglo-Austrian force was fifty-two thousand, the Franco-Bavarian fifty-six thou-

sand. Marlborough commenced his operations before daybreak, and the morning being hazy, the enemy did not perceive his approach until the English troops began to drive back their outposts and foragers. Confusion then prevailed, the artillery was hurried forward, and every means used to bring the army into order of battle. Marlborough's alertness had thus enabled him to surprise his antagonist, who unquestionably had kept an insufficient watch upon their opponent's movements.

At eight o'clock the armies were so near that the French guns opened fire; but the duke waited to hear that Prince Eugene had arrived at his appointed position on the right before he gave orders for the attack. Meanwhile the chaplains to each regiment were ordered to their posts, and service was performed while the troops stood to their arms.

It was noon before a messenger from the prince announced that he was ready. Marlborough instantly mounted his horse, and ordered Lord Cutts to lead the attack on the village of Blenheim, while he himself carried the main body of the English troops across the Nebel, a little stream which separated the two armies.

From about one o'clock till five in the afternoon, the battle raged with various fortune, and the French and Bavarians manfully contested the victory. Many charges, both on Prince Eugene's side and on the duke's, were unsuccessful, and the troops had to be rallied, reinforced, and brought again to the attack.

The duke's first assault on Blenheim was repulsed with loss. He then bent all his efforts to break the French line about the centre. He had succeeded in carrying his left wing over the Nebel, and the marsh in front of the French line, when he was recalled to the

centre by a repulse which Tallard's Irish brigade had given the Hanoverian troops. Marlborough charged the flank of the Irish with cavalry, broke them, and restored the battle. Meanwhile Prince Eugene had been repulsed in three attacks; but at last a decisive success was achieved by the duke in person. He had prepared the main body of his cavalry, eight thousand in number, and at five in the afternoon, by a decisive charge, the centre of the French line was broken. The French cavalry fled, and nine battalions of the French infantry, attacked by the English horse, and finding themselves isolated, laid down their arms. Marshal Tallard, scorning to fly, found himself shut in by the Danube on the one side, and the victorious troops of the duke on the other. He and all his staff, with several other officers of distinction, gave up their swords. The whole French portion of the Franco-Bavarian army was now driven off the field. The village of Blenheim itself, indeed, was still held by several French regiments, who were now without a commander, and without the possibility of retreat. The duke, therefore, directed his attention this way, and brought up forces and artillery on every side, until, no hope remaining, the officers commanding in the village surrendered at discretion. The force thus captured consisted of twenty-four battalions and twelve squadrons, and there then remained, of the whole French army, nothing but fugitives.

The prince had not met with such signal success on his side. Austrians met Bavarians with alternate loss and gain. But he had pressed the enemy closely, and the defeat of Marshal Tallard soon compelled the elector to beat a retreat. The chief feature of the day, however, was the utter dispersal of Marshal Tallard's portion of

the Franco-Bavarian army. The whole loss of that army was estimated, both by the duke and in intercepted letters from French officers, at forty thousand men. The prisoners were fifteen thousand, including twelve hundred officers. Two German regiments who had fought on the Bavarian side now came over in a body and joined the Imperial army.

"Such," says Voltaire, "was the celebrated battle which the French call the battle of Hochstedt, the Germans Plentheim, and the English Blenheim. The conquerors had about five thousand killed, and eight thousand wounded, the greater part being on the side of Prince Eugene. The French army was almost entirely destroyed; of sixty thousand men, so long victorious, there never reassembled more than twenty thousand. About twelve thousand killed, fourteen thousand prisoners, all the cannon, a prodigious number of colours and standards, and twelve hundred officers, besides the commander himself, showed the power of the conqueror and signalized the day."

All Bavaria now remained in the hands of the victors, who early in September passed the Rhine. The forces of France were thus, by one battle, driven out of Germany. The leading features of this great victory were abundantly obvious, and they greatly resemble those of several of Napoleon's victories. The duke had confidence in the pluck and endurance of his English troops, and believed that with them he would be able to break the French centre, and then to throw it back upon the Danube, and so destroy it. His calculation was justified by the event. His antagonist also had committed several faults, their nature and effect were seen when he himself was forced to surrender, and when one

third of his whole force, isolated and surrounded in the village of Blenheim, had no choice but to render themselves prisoners or to be destroyed.

The importance of this signal victory can only be understood by examining the natural consequences of a defeat. These were so serious that Marlborough, at a council of war preceding the battle, justly said, "I know the danger, but a battle is absolutely necessary." Had not the progress of the French been arrested, all Europe would have fallen under the power of Louis. "If a power animated by the ambition, guided by the fanaticism, and directed by the ability of that of Louis, had gained the ascendancy in Europe, an universal despotism would have been established over the bodies, a cruel spiritual thraldom over the minds of men. France and Spain united under Bourbon princes, the power which revoked the edict of Nantes with that which established the Inquisition, would have proved beyond example destructive to the best interests of mankind."

VIII.

RAMILIES.

A.D 1706.

THE year following the victory of Blenheim was, for the most part, wasted in the struggles of Marlborough with his enemies at home, and with the dilatory and uncertain course of the allies of England abroad. He succeeded in forcing the French lines in Flanders; but the fruits of this great achievement were snatched from him by the constant backwardness of the Dutch generals, who opposed every measure which was urged by him. So grieved was he by their continual opposition, that on one occasion, when the opportunity of a brilliant success was thus lost, he exclaimed, "I feel at this moment ten years older than I was four years ago." In fact, towards the end of what he had hoped to make a glorious campaign, but which through this opposition had been lost in disputes, he fell seriously ill, and was obliged to retire for a time from active employment.

Meanwhile, the Imperial government had begun to show signs of jealousy and uneasiness that this great general should be employed in Flanders, and in the defence of Holland, instead of recovering the Austrian possessions on the Rhine, and liberating Lorraine. Pressing applications were made that the duke, instead of prosecuting the war in Belgium, would return to the Moselle, and co-operate with the Imperial forces in that

quarter. Taking his departure from the army at the end of October, 1705, Marlborough set out for Vienna, which he reached on the 12th of November. Here the Emperor Joseph created him a prince of the empire, and conferred on him the lordship of Mindelheim. But,—which gave him far more satisfaction, he succeeded in reconciling all differences, and in cementing the alliance, which seemed in danger of dissolution, between Austria, Prussia, and the Netherlands, against the ambitious designs of France. He then returned to the Hague, which he reached on the 11th of December, proceeding thence to London, which he reached early in the new year.

On the 25th of April, 1706, he again arrived at the Hague for the active duties of the approaching campaign. This year's warfare began at an earlier period than the previous ones, for the French general, with commendable zeal and activity, took the field in the spring, forced the German lines on the Motter, reduced Dreisenheim and Hagenau, and threatened the Palatinate. The duke, therefore, left the Hague on the 9th of May, the Dutch being now anxious to retain him with them, and offering him uncontrolled power over their forces. Accompanied by Overkirk, he passed through Rimemont, and reached Maestricht on the 12th. Here he reviewed the Dutch troops, and began to take measures for an attack on Namur. But Villeroy received orders from Paris rather to risk a battle than to give up this important place. Hence, in the third week in May, the two armies began to approach each other.

Villeroy and the Elector of Bavaria passed the Dyle, and approached Tirlemont. Their combined forces amounted to about sixty-two thousand men. The duke

with his English, joined the Dutch at Bilsen on the 20th of May, and on the 22nd he had intelligence of the arrival of the Danish contingent, which raised the strength of his army to about sixty thousand men. His first desire, now, was to learn the position of the enemy, and how best to come in contact with them. The field of battle ultimately proved to be in an elevated part of the plain of Brabant, lying between Maestricht, Louvain, and Namur. The village of Ramilies itself is but a few miles to the east of Wavre, the position of Marshal Blucher on the morning of the day of Waterloo.

On the 23rd of May, then, in 1706, the English, Dutch, and Danish army, commencing their march early in the morning, came in sight, about eight o'clock, of the Franco-Bavarian outposts. A fog for some time made everything obscure, but about ten o'clock the two armies stood in presence of each other. The French commander had formed his order of battle with the skill which experience generally gives; but he was opposed by a greater commander, whose eye speedily detected the weaknesses of his position.

The French and Bavarians were drawn up on ground which, by its nature, gave their order of battle a concave form. Thus the attacking enemy would have the advantage of being able to bring his men more rapidly from one side to the other, as required. The left wing of the French, also, though strongly posted, was in a position from which it could not easily move. Marlborough, therefore, was not long in forming his plan, which was, to turn the enemy's right wing; to seize an elevated position in the rear of that wing, and from that position to outflank the whole army.

He therefore began by a feigned attack, by his own

right wing, upon the left of the French. Villeroy immediately met this, as Marlborough intended, by sending for fresh troops from his centre, and by weakening his right. Pausing in his apparent attack, Marlborough promptly moved to the left all the infantry that were out of sight of the French, and fell upon the enemy's right wing, which was posted in Tavieres.

The attack succeeded, and Tavieres was carried. Villeroy, finding out his mistake, hurried his squadrons of dragoons to the succour of his right wing; but these squadrons were met by the Danish cavalry emerging from Tavieres, and they were all cut to pieces, or driven into the Mehaigne.

And now Ramilies itself, in the centre, became the object of attack. The duke ordered up from his own right wing every available squadron, and exposed himself much in leading the attack. He was, at one moment, thrown from his horse, and in danger of being made prisoner. While he was remounting, a cannon-ball killed his equerry, Captain Bingfield, who was assisting him.

But now the allied cavalry had reached the height of Ottomond, in the rear of the French position, and the success of the attack was secured. The French were in utter confusion in all parts of the field, and Ramilies itself was carried. There remained only the left wing of Villeroy's army; and this, attacked now by the reserves on Marlborough's right, and by the victorious troops which had cleared Ramilies, gave way as evening drew on, rushed in crowds down the descent behind their position, and fled for Judoigne. The cannon and baggage fell into the hands of the victors, who pursued the flying French and Bavarians until two o'clock in

the morning. The allied army did not halt in its pursuit till past midnight, when it had advanced to Meldert, five leagues from the field of battle, and two from Louvain.

This battle cost the Franco-Bavarian army thirteen thousand men, in killed, wounded, and prisoners: among whom were the princes of Soubise and Rohan, and a son of Marshal Tallard. The spoils of the day consisted of eighty colours and standards taken from the French; nearly all their artillery, and all the baggage which was in the field. The loss of the allies was one thousand and sixty-six killed, and two thousand five hundred and sixty-seven wounded. The vast difference between this, and the loss sustained at Blenheim, shows that the victory of Ramilies was gained by the duke's masterly manœuvres; and was not owing merely to the courage of the soldiers.

The results of the battle of Ramilies were very great. Louvain instantly surrendered; Brussels received the duke with open arms on the 28th. Mechlin, Alost, and Lierre, quickly followed. All Brabant was gained by this one victory. Nor was this all. Flanders caught the infection. Ghent opened its gates on the 1st of June; and Antwerp surrendered a few days afterwards. Ostend fell on the 6th of July; and in its harbour were taken two men-of-war, and forty-five smaller vessels.

IX.

TALAVERA.

A. D. 1809.

After the campaigns of Marlborough, the English army acquired little distinction in the field for more than a century. The battles of Dettingen (1743), Fontenoy (1745), and Minden (1759), were affairs in which England was involved by her Hanoverian alliances, and in which small bodies of English troops were engaged, with little glory, and with but trifling results. It was not until the next century had opened, and the talent and ambition of one of the world's greatest conquerors had almost reached the climax of universal dominion,—that England, for her own preservation, and for the rescue of the Spanish peninsula from his grasp, was compelled to send an army into Spain; which, under the guidance of one of the most consummate generals that the world has ever seen, chased the armies of France over province after province, from Lisbon to Biscay, and ultimately drove them over the Pyrenees.

The peninsular campaigns of the Duke of Wellington commenced with the brilliant affair of Vimiera; but we cannot dignify that engagement with the name of a great battle, in which the forces on either side, did not exceed thirteen or fourteen thousand men; and the fruits of which were snatched from the victor's hands by

the sudden arrival of a superior in command. It was on Sir Arthur Wellesley's second appearance in Portugal, in the year following the battle of Vimiera, that the contest really began; and the three great battles which distinguished its successive stages, were those of Talavera, Salamanca, and Vittoria. The first exhibited the power of Napoleon in Spain fairly grappled with; the second showed that power defeated; the third closed the struggle by its absolute downfal and expulsion. To these three great battles, then, we shall now direct our attention.

After his supercession in 1808, on the very day of Vimiera, Sir Arthur Wellesley had returned to England; but, happily, the indignation felt by the English people at the convention of Cintra, by which the results of that victory had been thrown away, warned the British government that it was needful in times of great emergency to depart from the rule of *seniority*, and to select a commander mainly on the ground of known and proved talent and ability. Hence the victor of Vimiera was again called into the field, and, on the 22nd of April, 1809, Sir Arthur Wellesley a second time landed in Portugal.

"The unexpected arrival of a victorious commander," says Sir W. Napier, "created the greatest enthusiasm:—the regency nominated him captain-general; the people hailed his presence, and an undefined but powerful sentiment that something great would be achieved, pervaded the public mind." Still, somewhat surprising, and rather overweening, was this confidence; for Sir Arthur Wellesley commanded only twenty-six thousand English and German troops;—the Spanish and Portuguese armies were of little worth, and the French emperor

had at that moment in the Peninsula, a force of *two hundred and seventy thousand men.*

Sir Arthur lost no time in bringing his troops into action. On the 12th of May he crossed the Douro, in the face of the French army, and carried Oporto. Soult had entered it two months before with twenty-five thousand five hundred men; he quitted it with nineteen thousand five hundred, having lost by the sword and by sickness, by assassination and capture, six thousand good soldiers. He had marched into Portugal with fifty-eight pieces of artillery, he quitted it without a gun! Yet Soult was perhaps the greatest of all Napoleon's generals. Sir Arthur's next object was, and indeed it seemed a necessity of his position, to seek the French armies, and to fight them with the least possible delay. The demand of the English, and of the Portuguese also, was to be led against the foe. To raise the spirit of the people of Spain and Portugal, and also of the governments of both countries, it was necessary to show that there was an army and a general in the field, and that neither the army nor the general were afraid of meeting the French.

At this period the Spanish generals and the Spanish ministers had not fully proved their entire inefficiency. They still boasted of their power to "drive the French out of Madrid, and out of Spain;" and if the English general had refused to co-operate with them, he would have been charged with cowardice or with treachery. On the 27th of June 1809, therefore, Sir Arthur, at the head of twenty-two thousand British troops, and with thirty guns, entered Spain, and began his march on Madrid. The Spanish general Cuesta, with an army of thirty-nine thousand men, was to co-operate with him.

This co-operation, however, proved to be nothing but hindrance and a source of vexation. The two armies marched forward, Sir Arthur grieved, day by day, by some failure of supplies, means of transport, or other necessary aid. On one occasion a delay of two whole days was created by the Spanish general's obstinacy. On the 24th of July Sir Arthur wrote to Lord Castlereagh, "I am not able to follow the enemy as I could wish; having found it impossible to procure *even one mule, or a cart in Spain* . . . . My troops have been in actual want of provisions for the last two days." Meanwhile the Spanish government took care of its own troops; and left the English to shift for themselves. "The French," writes Sir Arthur, "can take what they like—and will take it; while we cannot even buy common necessaries."

Joseph, the nominal King of Spain, was apprized of the approach of the English and Spanish forces, and marched out of Madrid with fifty-five thousand French veterans, commanded by Marshals Jourdan and Victor, to meet them. The two armies came into the neighbourhood of each other about the 22nd of July, 1809. Sir Arthur and Cuesta had agreed, on that day, that Victor's corps, which had been found detached from the rest of the French army, should be attacked on the following day. But when the English troops were getting under arms the next morning, the old Spaniard was not up, and finally, he objected to any attack that day. The fact was, that the French general had contrived to corrupt some of Cuesta's staff, and thus difficulties were constantly thrown in the way.

Victor, whose discomfiture would have been easy on the 23rd, had now escaped, and had joined Sebastiani

and King Joseph. The whole French army now amounted to fifty-six thousand one hundred and twenty-two men, and, confident in their strength, the commanders resolved at once to march upon Talavera, and to attack the Anglo-Spanish army.

Two or three minor engagements preceded the general battle. On the 27th, in the afternoon, Victor's advanced guards came upon the British outposts, and immediately attacked them. The English troops, some of whom then saw fire for the first time, were thrown into some confusion, and Sir Arthur himself narrowly escaped being made prisoner. A body of ten thousand Spanish which was posted near, took such an alarm, that they broke and fled, giving out that "all was lost." Sir Arthur, with some difficulty, restored order, brought up fresh troops, and the French were finally driven off. Yet such was the effect of this panic among the Spanish troops, that they went into action the next day with six thousand men less than their previous number.

That same night Victor, encouraged by the effect of the surprise just narrated, made an attack after sunset on a hill which was the key of the English position. For a moment the French attack succeeded, but General Hill brought up the 48th regiment, and at last expelled the French from the ground which they had gained. The British had lost eight hundred men, and the French one thousand, in this affair, which was not ended until long after dark.

As soon, however, as the day dawned, the French renewed the attack. Once more they ascended the hill, and struggled hand to hand with the English infantry. General Hill was wounded, and many officers fell around him. But the French never gained the upper

hand. After a severe contest, they fell back; and the English pressed down the hill after them, until the whole of the attacking column got into confusion, and finally rushed down the declivity in headlong rout. This single attack, which lasted only forty minutes, cost the French nearly fifteen hundred men.

A consultation was now held in the French camp, as to the expediency of immediately risking a general battle. Jourdan strongly urged the taking up a position behind the Alberche, and there awaiting the approach of Soult, who, with another army, was expected to menace the English on their flank and rear in a few days. Victor was more confident, promising to carry the hill on the English left, if Sebastiani would attack the centre and right at the same moment. He added "If such a combination can fail, it is time that we gave up war."

King Joseph hesitated; when, at that moment, a despatch arrived from Soult, stating that he could not reach the neighbourhood in less than a week. This decided the matter, and orders were given to attack.

Meanwhile, many discouragements prevailed in the English camp. Provisions were scarce, and the men suffered from hunger. Among the Spaniards all was confusion and distrust. Such alarm was created by Cuesta's conduct, that in the very midst of the battle, his own countryman, the Duke d'Albuquerque, sent one of his staff to warn Sir Arthur Wellesley that "Cuesta was betraying him." Sir Arthur received the message while seated on the hill, intently watching the movements of the French. He listened to it without even turning his head; and coolly replied to the officer who brought him the message, "Very well, you may return to your brigade;" and then quietly resumed his survey

But now the battle began. The allied army was posted near Talavera, having that city and the Tagus on its right, a hill already referred to on its left, a sort of ravine and water-course in front; and looking towards the Alberche,—a river which flows into the Tagus,—in front of which lay the whole French army. "The British and Germans," says Sir W. Napier, "were somewhat above nineteen thousand sabres and bayonets, with thirty guns. The Spaniards were thirty-three or thirty-four thousand men, with seventy guns. The French advanced with eighty guns, and nearly fifty thousand men. But what a difference in the quality of the troops! The French were all hardy veterans; while the genuine soldiers of the allied army did not exceed nineteen thousand."

Before one o'clock the French soldiers were seen to gather round their eagles, and the rolling of drums was heard along the whole line. Half an hour later, King Joseph's guards, the reserve, and the fourth corps were descried in march; and soon the table-land and the height on the French right were covered with dark and lowering masses. Victor gave the signal for battle, and eighty pieces of artillery sent a tempest of bullets before the light troops, who came on with all the swiftness and violence of a hailstorm, followed by the broad black columns in all the majesty of war.

"Sir Arthur Wellesley from the hill viewed the whole field of battle. He saw the fourth corps rushing forwards with the usual impetuosity of French soldiers and falling upon Campbell's division, which held the right centre, with infinite fury; yet that general, assisted by Mackenzie's brigade and two Spanish battalions, withstood their utmost efforts. The British regiment

met the advancing columns with loud shouts, broke their front, lapped their flanks with fire, and at last pushed them back with a terrible carnage. Ten guns were taken; but as Campbell feared to break his line by a pursuit, the French rallied, and made head for another attack. Then the British artillery played vehemently upon them; a Spanish regiment of cavalry charged their flank; they retired in disorder, and the victory was secured in that quarter."

This was on the right of the English line. On the left, two different columns of French were seen advancing towards the hill, the key of the position. Sir Arthur sent forward an English regiment of cavalry, and the 1st German hussars, to charge the heads of these columns. A hollow cleft, not before perceived, stopped the Germans; some of the English leaped it, in twos and threes, and in desultory manner fell upon the French infantry. Some Polish lancers charged them while thus disordered, and the regiment was broken, and lost two hundred and seven officers and men.

Meanwhile, one of the French attacking columns was actually contending for possession of the hill; and at the same time a powerful mass of infantry, crossing the ravine, pressed hard upon the English centre. The French attack was at first driven back; then the English Guards, in the excitement of success, rushed after them with reckless ardour. The French reserves charged them; the Guards, disordered, were broken; the German Legion, adjoining, got into confusion, and for the moment the English centre seemed to be shaken and in disorder.

But when the Guards had made their rash charge,

Sir Arthur, foreseeing the issue of it, had ordered up the 48th regiment; and had also sent for Cotton's light-horse. The French came on, pushing before them the disordered foot-guards. Sir Arthur charged them with the 48th, brought them to a stand; the Guards and the German Legion speedily recovered their ranks; and at last this terrible attack was defeated, and the French were pushed back over the ravine, carrying with them their general, Lapisse, mortally wounded.

Meanwhile their attack on the hill had failed; while on the Spanish part of the army, safely posted behind redoubts in Talavera, they had made no assault. And so closed the battle of Talavera. Both sides remained in the position of the morning when night closed upon them. But at day-break the French began their retreat; and before six o'clock their whole army was safely encamped behind the Alberche. That day, too, Sir Robert Crawford joined the British army, bringing with him the 43rd, the 52nd, and the 95th regiments; which troops immediately relieved the rest of the army of the outpost-duty.

The loss of the English in this terrible contest was six thousand two hundred and sixty-eight; including in the reckoning all the attacks, both on the 27th and the 28th. The loss of the French was eight thousand seven hundred and ninety-four, according to their own returns. They lost also seventeen guns, some tumbrils, and several hundred prisoners.

Sir Arthur Wellesley, as we have said, was obliged to fight this battle. Had he refused to advance, the Spanish government and people would have deemed his presence useless, and would have upbraided him with want of courage. And having advanced, the French mar-

shals very naturally looked upon him as their prey; and attacked him, deeming his defeat certain.

The reputation gained by the victory was obviously that arising from a fearless meeting of the attack of a fine French army of fifty thousand men, led by two celebrated generals, with an Anglo-German force of nineteen thousand, encumbered with the merely nominal aid of thirty-four thousand Spaniards. A French critic, General Jomini, thus speaks of the moral result: "This battle at once restored the reputation of the British army, which, during a century past, had declined. It was now ascertained, that the English infantry could dispute the palm with the best in Europe."

Sir Arthur, too, had now seen, and his troops had seen and proved, the value of the Spanish army; and all illusion on that subject had ceased. Their artillery was well trained, and sometimes rendered good service; but their cavalry was wretched; and their infantry was totally unable to perform evolutions under fire without falling into confusion. The result therefore naturally was, that the English general, retiring into Portugal, commenced plans to be carried out by English and Portuguese forces, in which the Spanish armies bore little or no part. Those plans will be briefly adverted to in the following chapters.

The merits of the English commander were promptly recognized by his own government. He was immediately created Baron Douro and Viscount Wellington, of Talavera, and of Wellington in the county of Somerset.

There is a remarkable similarity, in all its chief features, between this, the first of Wellington's great battles, and Waterloo, his last. Doubling the numbers

on both sides, the proportions were nearly the same. The French at Talavera had more than fifty thousand excellent troops,—at Waterloo they had almost twice as many. The great English general had about nineteen thousand good troops at Talavera, with the nominal aid of thirty thousand worthless ones. At Waterloo, he had about thirty-three or thirty-four thousand good troops, with the addition of about as many unreliable ones. In both cases alike, the French, confident of success, made the attack; and in both cases they were foiled and driven back by a British force of less than half their number. The one material difference between the two conflicts lay in this,—that in the second great battle, just as Napoleon's last attack had been repelled, a force of fifty thousand Prussians broke in upon the retreating French, and utterly dispersed and annihilated their already-beaten army.

X.

SALAMANCA.

A. D. 1812.

Lord Wellington had fought the battle of Talavera in less than three months after he had marched out of Lisbon, and in only three months and six days after his landing in Portugal. He had seen some kind of action and enterprise to be absolutely necessary. It was demanded by England; it was expected by Spain and Portugal. Hence he first drove the French out of Oporto and out of the Portuguese dominions, and then, in conjunction with a Spanish army, marched upon Madrid, and fought a battle with the French.

But these three months sufficed to show him, how utterly valueless was the aid proffered him by the Spaniards. They left him without provisions; they furnished him with no means of transport; and when they placed an army by his side, that army could do nothing but run away, and spread alarm and consternation on every side. Hence, so soon as he fully understood the real condition of affairs, he wrote home to the British government in these plain terms:

"Spain has proved untrue to her alliance because she is untrue to herself;" "and until some great change shall be effected in the conduct of the military resources of Spain, and in the state of her armies, no British army

can attempt safely to co-operate with Spanish troops in the territories of Spain."

Having arrived at this conclusion, Lord Wellington soon withdrew his army from Spain, retired into Portugal, and began to concert measures for the effectual defence of that kingdom. At home, party spirit, as usual, led to injustice. The opposition in the British parliament questioned the whole of his conduct of the past campaign. Sir W. Napier tells us, that "his merits, they said, were nought; his actions silly, presumptuous, and rash; his campaign one deserving not reward but punishment. Yet he had delivered Portugal, cleared Galicia and Estramadura, and forced one hundred thousand French veterans to abandon the offensive and concentrate about Madrid!"

He now calmly submitted to the British government his views of the defence of Portugal. He assigned to Marshal Beresford the organization of the Portuguese army; he required only thirty thousand British troops to be permanently maintained; and with this force he expected to be able to defend Portugal, at least until Spain should be thoroughly subdued by the French; so as to allow of the concentration of their whole force on the work of subjugating Portugal.

The wisdom and expediency of this employment of English troops and English revenues in foreign war, was abundantly evident. For, when the Continent should have been wholly conquered by Napoleon, he would then, as he plainly declared, attempt the invasion of England. Hence, to keep his armies employed in the Peninsula, was the way plainly pointed out by common sense, as likely to postpone or wholly avert a French invasion of the British islands. To defend Portugal,

therefore, was Wellington's first object; for Portugal had become a sort of outwork of England.

The Spanish government, meanwhile, with equal imbecility and self-sufficiency, chose to rush into inevitable defeat. They had starved the English army; which, in a whole month, got only ten days' bread; and which lost one thousand horses from mere want of provender; and had thus forced Lord Wellington to retire into Portugal. They now chose, with an army of fifty thousand men, to give battle to the French at Ocana; where, on the 12th of November, they sustained such a total defeat, that ten days after the battle not a single battalion kept the field. No fewer than twenty-six thousand of the Spaniards laid down their arms, and the rest were utterly scattered and dispersed.

At the opening of 1810 Napoleon resolved to complete the conquest of the Peninsula. He augmented his armies in Spain to three hundred and sixty-six thousand men. One army, consisting of sixty-five thousand men, under the command of Soult, was charged with the subjugation of Andalusia; and another, of eighty thousand men, under Massena, was to move to the west, and reduce Portugal. Now, therefore, must Wellington's plans for the defence of Portugal be brought to the test.

The actual force of Massena's army in May 1810, is shown by French returns given by Sir W. Napier, to have been eighty-six thousand eight hundred and forty-seven men.

On the 1st of June the French commander invested Ciudad Rodrigo, which capitulated on the 11th of July. Almeida surrendered on the 26th of August, and thus the road to Lisbon was opened to the French army. Wellington would gladly have fought a battle to save

these fortresses; but if he engaged eighty thousand French, with thirty-two thousand English and Portuguese, and did not signally defeat them; what would then have become of Portugal? Still, when on Portuguese ground, and engaged in the defence of Portugal, he thought it right, on September 27th, to make one stand at Busaco; where he inflicted on the French a loss of four thousand five hundred men, at a cost, to his own army, of only thirteen hundred. Massena then began even to think of retreating into Spain; when a peasant informed him of a mountain-pass by which he might carry his army into a position from which he could threaten Wellington's left. This compelled the English general again to make a retrograde movement; and on the 15th of October the whole British and Portuguese army was collected within the lines of Torres Vedras.

These now famous lines, which Wellington had long been silently constructing, were so little thought of either in England or in France, that military instructions were actually given in England commencing thus: "As it is probable the army will embark in September." And the French commander, on his part, found his way suddenly stopped by an insurmountable obstacle, of the existence of which he had never before heard.

Lord Wellington had observed that on the land side (and the French had no force upon the water) Lisbon could be completely defended by a series of entrenchments properly manned. Silently, therefore, during many months past, he had been at work on these lines. They were now complete, mounting six hundred guns, and when manned by fifty thousand men they might have defied Napoleon himself at the head of one of his largest armies.

Massena, astonished, employed several days in examining these lines on every side, but at no point could he find an attack to be feasible. One or two attempts were made, in which his troops were roughly handled, and one of his generals killed, At last, altogether perplexed, he sent off General Foy to Paris to ask of Napoleon what was to be done. But Napoleon himself had no remedy to prescribe, and hence, after remaining before the lines for one whole month, until utter starvation menaced his army, the French marshal commenced a retreat. He first retired to Santarem, where he remained until the following March. He then finally retreated out of Portugal, having lost, in the short space of seven months, not fewer than forty-five thousand men, chiefly by exposure, disease, and starvation. Lord Wellington followed him, and at once invested Almeida. Massena ventured on an engagement at Fuentes d'Onore. but failed, and Almeida capitulated to the English on the 12th of May, 1811.

This campaign had greatly raised the hopes and the confidence of England, and had placed the character of her general on an unassailable elevation. Portugal had been defended, and a French marshal with a noble army had been driven back in defeat. Lord Wellington now, therefore, resolved to begin offensive operations in Spain, and he sat down before Badajoz. But Napoleon had at last awakened to the real character of this great struggle. He resolved that Badajoz should not be lost. He therefore earnestly and strenuously increased his forces in Spain, until, in September 1811, they again amounted to three hundred and sixty-eight thousand men. Soult and Marmont received their orders, and approached Badajoz with sixty thousand men. Lord

Wellington retired, but in July he threatened Ciudad Rodrigo, when again the two French marshals marched to its relief with a greatly superior army. And now, as the winter approached, both armies went into cantonments, and the campaign of 1811 ended.

But with January 1812 commenced that career of triumph which only ended at Waterloo. In 1810 Wellington had saved Portugal; in 1811 he had threatened and disquieted the French armies in their possession of Spain; but the opening year was not to close until that possession was very seriously endangered.

Silently, all November and December, Wellington's preparations were going on. Soult imagined that he was about to renew the siege of Badajoz, but suddenly, in the earliest days of January, a bridge was thrown over the Agueda, and the English army crossed the river and invested Ciudad Rodrigo. The siege commenced on the 8th, and on the 19th the place was stormed and carried. It had cost the French a siege of six weeks to take it from the Spaniards two years before. On hearing of its capture in twelve days, Marmont wrote to Napoleon, saying, "On the 16th the English batteries opened their fire: on the 19th the place was taken by storm, and fell into the power of the enemy. There is something so incomprehensible in all this, that until I know more I refrain from any observation."

Badajoz, a far stronger place, was next invested, on the 17th of March, and on the 6th of April it was taken by storm. And here, too, General Lery, a French engineer, expressed his astonishment, writing thus: "I think the capture of Badajoz a very extraordinary event, and I should be at a loss to account for it in any manner consistent with probability." These two great strong-

holds, the border-fortresses, had now been taken, and the way was thus opened into the heart of Spain. All Europe saw with astonishment that a little English army, seldom amounting,—even with the aid of the Portuguese,—to more than forty thousand men, could counteract the efforts of the best armies of France, led by Napoleon's most trusted generals.

After these exploits, Wellington gave his army some rest until the harvest should grow up, and provisions be more easily obtained. But in May he sent General Hill to storm the forts at Almarez on the Tagus, when the French works, with all their artillery and stores, fell into the hands of the English, who lost only one hundred and eighty men. By this able manœuvre the two armies of Marmont and Soult were separated.

On the 13th of June, the rains having ceased, and the field magazines being completed, Wellington passed the Agueda, and on the 17th he entered Salamanca, the people shouting, singing, and weeping for joy. The forts, however, were still held by French garrisons, and were not taken until the 27th.

On the 8th of July, Marmont, the French general now opposed to Wellington, received a reinforcement of six thousand men, and both he and Wellington began to prepare for a battle. On the 15th and 16th, Marmont, who had previously made several deceptive movements, concentrated his beautiful and gallant army between Toro and the Hornija river. Then began a series of manœuvres, continued for several successive days, until, on the 20th, the two armies were in sight, marching on parallel heights within musket-shot of each other in the most perfect array. The strength of each army amounted to from forty-five to forty-eight thousand

men; but of Wellington's force a considerable portion consisted of Portuguese troops.

In two or three days more, Marmont would have been joined by two other French corps, augmenting his force by nearly twenty thousand men. But then he apprehended the arrival of either king Joseph, or Jourdan, the senior marshal then in Spain, either of whom would have superseded him in the command. His object, therefore, was either to force the English to retreat from Salamanca, or else to fight a battle, and if possible gain a victory, before either of his superiors in command could arrive.

On the 22nd of July, some change of position on the part of the English army gave Marmont the impression that Wellington was about to retire towards Ciudad Rodrigo. Eager not to let the English thus escape him, the French general ordered Maucune's division, which formed his left, to march forward so as to fall upon the flank of the British in their expected retreat. They did so; but in so advancing a chasm intervened between them and the division of Bonnet, which formed part of the French centre. Word was brought to Wellington of this movement. "Starting up, he repaired to the high ground, and observed their movements for some time with stern contentment. Their left wing was entirely separated from the centre. The fault was flagrant, and he fixed it with the stroke of a thunderbolt." Turning to the Spanish general Alava who stood by his side, he exclaimed, "Mon cher Alava, Marmont est perdu!"

"A few orders issued suddenly from his lips like the incantations of a wizard, and suddenly the dark mass of troops seemed animated by some mighty spirit. Rush-

ing down the slope of the mountain, they entered the great basin. And now, after long coiling and winding like angry serpents, the armies suddenly fastened together in deadly strife.

"Marmont saw the country beneath him suddenly covered with enemies when he was in the act of making a complicated evolution; and when by the rash advance of his left, his troops were separated into three parts, each at too great a distance to assist the other. In this crisis, despatching officer after officer, some to hasten up his troops from the forest, some to stop the march of his left wing, he still looked for victory, till he saw Pakenham with his division penetrate between his left and his centre; then hope died within him, and he was hurrying in person to the fatal spot, when an exploding shell stretched him on the field, with two deep wounds in his side."

This naturally augmented the confusion of the French; but they still fought manfully. It was just five o'clock when Pakenham fell on Maucune, who, little thinking of such an onset, expected to see, from the summit of a hill he had just gained, the allies in full retreat. Still, his gunners stood to their guns, and his cavalry charged; but both were killed or repulsed; the infantry endeavoured to form a front, but in the midst of its evolution it was charged and broken. The British cavalry fell upon the rear, while Leith, with the fifth division, bore down on the right flank. For awhile, the French veterans maintained some kind of order, but at last the cavalry broke them; Thomiere, one of their generals, was killed, two thousand of the French threw down their arms, and the whole division was utterly routed.

The next portion of the French line, Clausel's division,

while warmly engaged with the English under Cole and Leith, had to sustain a charge from twelve hundred British dragoons. The whole French division was broken in an instant. Five guns and two thousand prisoners were taken in a few minutes. The entire of the left wing of the French army was now only a helpless mob of fugitives. In the centre the struggle was a more arduous one. The French held a strong position on a hill—the Arapiles. Two attacks by the Portuguese and English, were repelled. Beresford, Cole, and Leith, were all wounded, and the English centre for a moment was shaken and in danger. But Wellington, whose eye was always where the peril was greatest, immediately ordered up Clinton's division from the rear, and restored the battle. The ridge of the Arapiles was regained. "And now the current once more set in for the British. Pakenham continued to outflank the French left; Foy retired from the ridge of Calveriza, and the allied host, righting itself like a gallant ship after a sudden gust, again bore right onwards, holding its course through blood and gloom."

There remained only the division of Foy, which formed the extreme right of the French line, and still maintained a gallant fight. It seemed difficult for this general to extricate his division, but he did it with great dexterity. Just as the darkness fell, he increased his skirmishers, and brought forward some cavalry, as if for a charge. But when the English had prepared themselves for a real encounter, the skirmishers fell back, and the English pursued; but when they reached the top of the hill, the main body of the French had escaped into a forest hard by, where darkness gave them safety.

Another failure on the part of a Spaniard, here, again,

favoured the French. The castle of Alba, on the Tormes, was garrisoned by a Spanish force, under Carlos d'Espana, This, if maintained, would have stopped the French in their flight by the main road, and have forced them to take the fords. But D'Espana, without informing Wellington, had withdrawn the garrison, and left the road open! "Had the castle of Alba been held," says Napier, "the French could never have carried off a third of their army." But by this piece of Spanish folly or cowardice, they were permitted to escape.

As it was, their loss was enormous. They went into action with forty-three thousand eight hundred infantry and four thousand cavalry. Three weeks after, their general, Clausel, who succeeded Marmont in the command, wrote to the Minister of War at Paris, "The army consists of twenty thousand infantry, and eighteen hundred horse." So that, by death or wounds or capture, it had lost more than half of its numbers. On the part of the allies, the loss was three thousand one hundred and seventy-six British, two thousand and eighteen Portuguese, and eight Spanish. One general was killed, and five were among the wounded. Wellington himself was struck in the thigh by a spent ball, which passed through his holster. This was one of the last incidents of this great battle; in which the English leader, to use a French officer's expression, "defeated forty thousand men in forty minutes." "Late in the evening of that great day," says Sir William Napier, "I saw him behind my regiment, then marching towards the ford. He was alone; the flush of victory was on his brow, his eyes were eager and watchful, but his voice was calm and even gentle. More than the rival of Marlborough,—for he had defeated greater generals than Marlborough

ever encountered, he seemed with prescient pride to accept this victory only as an earnest of future glory."

The French fled with such celerity, that their head-quarters, on the following night, were at Flores de Avila, no less than forty miles from the field of battle! The English army, on the other hand, entered Madrid on the 12th of August, amidst a scene of the wildest ecstasy. "No words can express the enthusiasm which prevailed when the English standards were seen in the distance, and the scarlet uniforms began to be discerned through the crowd. Amidst a countless multitude, wrought up to the highest pitch of rapturous feeling; amidst tears of gratitude and shouts of triumph, the British army entered the Spanish capital, not as conquerors, but as friends; not as oppressors, but deliverers." As for Wellington, "with tears and every sign of deep emotion, the multitudes crowded round his horse, hung by his stirrups, touched his clothes, and throwing themselves on their knees, blessed him aloud." The intrusive king, with about twelve thousand men, had fled out of the city a few days previous.

The Retiro, the largest arsenal which the French possessed in Spain, still had a garrison of seventeen hundred men. But it surrendered on the 13th, and the British found in it, one hundred and eighty pieces of cannon, twenty thousand stand of arms, and immense stores of all kinds. Meanwhile, "the French affairs in every part of the Peninsula now exhibited that general crash and ruin which so usually follows a great military disaster, and presages the breaking up of political power."

Nor were the mighty results of this great battle limited to Southern Europe. At the very moment when it took place, Napoleon, at the head of four hundred

and fifty thousand men, was entering the heart of the Russian empire. The news of the defeat of his forces in Spain, reached him on the evening preceding the great battle of Borodino. It doubtless reached the Emperor Alexander also; and the news must have greatly aided the Russian monarch in forming that remarkable resolve, "I am *immoveable;* and no terms whatever shall induce me to terminate the war, or to fail in the sacred duty of avenging our country." And, in a general order, issued shortly after, General Kutosoff, Alexander's chief commander, said, "The hand of God is falling heavily on Napoleon: *Madrid is taken.*" Still, when, in October, Wellington, from the want of battering-artillery, failed in carrying the castle of Burgos, faction again raised its head in England, and even dared to question his skill and talent as a general! It was with reference to some of these attacks that Wellington took the following review of the results of the year.

"I fear that the public will be disappointed at the results of the last campaign: and yet it is, in fact, the most important and successful campaign in which a British army has been engaged for the last century. We have taken by siege Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz, and Salamanca, and the Retiro has surrendered. Since January, this army has sent to England little short of twenty thousand prisoners; and it has taken and destroyed, or we now possess, little short of three thousand pieces of cannon."

More wonderful achievements, occupying a series of years, never were wrought out by a British army. Sir William Napier justly traces the triumph of Salamanca and other victories to the forethought of Wellington, in having laid such a foundation as he had provided in

Torres Vedras. "This strong post was of his own planning,—he had chosen it, fortified it, defended it, and now, knowing its full value, he was availing himself of its advantages. The tree was planted to bear such fruit as was gathered at Salamanca, and the value of his combinations must be estimated from the general result. He had only sixty thousand disposable troops, and one hundred thousand were especially appointed to watch and control him; yet he passed the frontier, defeated forty-five thousand men in a pitched battle, and drove twenty thousand others from Madrid in confusion, without difficulty and without risk. No general was ever more entitled to the honour of victory."

XI.

VITTORIA.

A.D. 1813.

THE splendid achievements of the campaign of 1812 produced their natural results. Even the torpid obstinacy of Castilian pride was at last overcome, and by a decree of the Cortes of September 22nd, 1812, the great English general was invested with the supreme command of the Spanish armies. He repaired to Cadiz on the 24th of December, and on the 30th he was received by the Cortes in full assembly. The news of Napoleon's overthrow in Russia had just arrived, and all hearts seemed to expand with hope of the speedy expulsion of his troops from Spain.

England herself also now began to put forth efforts commensurate with the crisis. At the opening of the year 1813 her land forces consisted of two hundred and twenty-eight thousand men, besides twenty-eight thousand in India, ninety-three thousand militia at home, and thirty-two thousand foreign troops in the British service. And, besides these, she had two hundred thousand native troops in India, a local militia of three hundred thousand, and a yeomanry cavalry of sixty-eight thousand, forming a grand total of nine hundred and forty-nine thousand men in arms; and her expenditure in the year amounted to one hundred and eighteen millions sterling.

Thus supported, her great commander, of whom it may

be questioned if his equal *in all respects* ever stood upon a field of battle, looked forward with reasonable expectation to a coming harvest; to a campaign in which, after four years' toils and sufferings, the grand object of the final expulsion of the French from Spain might be anticipated. And assuredly the means he took to gain this end in the simplest and completest manner, were marked by the most consummate skill and wisdom.

To be nearer to his supplies, and to relieve the wasted provinces of Spain, Wellington had withdrawn his army into cantonments on the Coa and the Agueda, that is, in Leon and in Beira, or Northern Portugal. All the Lusitanian kingdom had long been free from the French, and the campaign of 1812 had compelled them to abandon all Andalusia, Murcia, Granada, Asturias and Estramadura. The French army now occupied only central and eastern Spain, the bulk of the troops being quartered in New and Old Castile.

Wellington's chief attention was naturally devoted, during the winter, to the task of reorganizing his forces for the final struggle of the opening year. His own English army was the only force he had which was at all in a condition to march against the enemy. Of the Spanish troops he found it necessary to give the Spanish minister of war, in March 1813, the following description:—"There is not a single battalion or squadron in the Spanish armies in a condition to take the field; there is not in the whole kingdom of Spain a depôt of provisions for the support of a single battalion for one day; there is not a shilling of money in any military chest. To move them forward at any point now, against even inconsiderable bodies of the enemy, would be to insure their certain destruction."

But by unceasing exertions these evils were, in a measure, overcome; and Wellington found himself, in the month of May, 1813, for the first time in a state approaching to an equality with the French. Their force, which in former years had often amounted to nearly four hundred thousand men, was now reduced to two hundred and thirty-nine thousand, of which about one hundred and ninety-seven thousand were present with the eagles. Meanwhile Wellington's nominal force now amounted to two hundred thousand, and although only about one half of this number were fit to take the field, the remainder was still of use in maintaining communications, guarding convoys, and cutting off the foraging parties of the enemy. His principal army of English and Portuguese mustered about seventy-five thousand men, of whom about forty-four thousand were English. The efficiency of the Portuguese troops was advanced in a surprising manner; reinforcements, especially of cavalry, had arrived from England; and the Anglo-Portuguese troops, conscious of an improved organization, were more confident than ever; while the French, hearing of the calamities of their brethren in Russia, were proportionably depressed. Even the Spaniards had, in some numbers, been brought into better condition:—Wellington had kept them fed and clothed during the winter, and had now several efficient corps of native troops, ready to act in conjunction with his own army. Hence, on the 22nd of May the great English general began his march, and when he crossed the stream which divides Portugal from Spain, he rose in his stirrups, and waving his hand, exclaimed, "Good-bye to Portugal!"

The military skill and talent of a commander is never more conspicuously seen than in those manœuvres by

which an enemy is defeated *without a battle.* Such manœuvres often resemble the skill and power with which an able and fearless horseman, even while on the ground, will control a powerful courser, forcing him backwards by a small leverage upon his mouth. In the present instance the French still had a considerable army and able generals, and they occupied the centre of Spain, defending the capital, and ready to fight, if needful, a succession of battles before they would relinquish their prey. But their more able antagonist forced them to retreat, step by step, without fighting, until their last and only stand was made at Vittoria, almost in sight of France; and then delivering his attack, he utterly routed them, and chased them over the Pyrenees. On the 22nd of May, as we have said, the English army marched out of Portugal; on the 21st of June it fought and gained the battle of Vittoria; and before the 1st of July the shattered remains of the French army, with their King Joseph at their head, had fled over the Pyrenees. Little more than a single month had sufficed to destroy, uproot, and utterly abolish the French dominion in Spain, and that at a time, too, when there were still one hundred and ninety-seven thousand French soldiers in the field, under many able commanders.

A brave general of the ordinary kind would have marched in quest of the French, lying in front of Madrid; would have defeated them, and taken the capital. All the smaller bodies of French in Spain would then have been called round the king; and in July a second battle would have been fought in Aragon, or in front of Burgos. One more victory,—a third, supposing the English to have been always victorious, might have sent the French out of Spain; but any mis-

take or mishap might have prevented this. But Wellington, by masterly tactics, always threatening to turn the enemy's right wing and to get upon his communications, backed his foe as a man backs a horse, till he could bring the opposing army into a position fit for his purpose; and then, delivering at once a knock-down blow, he drove the whole mass, king and army, in four-and-twenty hours, out of Spain.

King Joseph had reckoned, in the spring, upon a direct attack by the great road to Madrid; but when it would come, or where it would fall, he could not divine, for Wellington kept him constantly in doubt, by a variety of feigned movements.

At last, towards the end of May, he found that Wellington, sending forty thousand men under Graham through the difficult passes of the Tras os Montes, and moving himself a week after on the Esla, had carried his whole army, by the 4th of June, over the Douro, and was now in full march for Valladolid. If he should gain that place, Joseph well knew that his communications would be cut off, and his whole army taken, to use Napoleon's phrase, "*flagrante delicto.*" Hastily, therefore, Madrid was abandoned, the whole army put in retreat; and now Joseph would make his stand at Burgos.

Thus one hundred miles of Spanish ground had been cleared of the French without firing a shot. And now, Joseph would fight for his kingdom in this, his second position. But his generals examined the country, and disliked the prospect. Meanwhile Wellington pushed on, conducting his operations continually on the same principle,—pushing forwards his left wing, and outflanking and turning the French right. Again perplexed, Joseph now abandoned his second purpose, as

he had abandoned his first. Burgos must be given up, and the retreat must be continued on Vittoria. Into Vittoria there was poured, therefore, the artillery depôts of Madrid, of Valladolid, and of Burgos, and the baggage and stores of several armies; with the king's valuables, the archives, and papers of the State and of the army, and a large amount of treasure.

Vittoria is only twenty-six miles from Irun, on the French frontier. Here, therefore, had been driven together, like a flock of sheep, the intruders and plunderers of Spain; and one vigorous assault only was needed to rid the land of them altogether. It was not long delayed.

It was about the 15th of June when King Joseph found his army assembled round Vittoria, reckoning, Napier tells us, from sixty to seventy thousand men. Wellington had left his sixth division at Medina de Pomar, and therefore had sixty thousand English and Portuguese, besides some Spanish troops. In the number and calibre of their guns the French had the advantage.

From the mountain-region through which the British army was marching, the way to Vittoria lay over many a rugged steep, and through many dangerous defiles; but no difficulty was allowed to stop their march. "Six days they toiled unceasingly; but on the seventh, swelled by a Spanish reinforcement, they burst like raging streams from every defile, and went foaming into the basin of Vittoria."

The French army was drawn up round this basin, which is a small plain about ten miles in length, by eight in breadth, through which runs the river Zadora. As this battle-field was approached by various mountain-

passes, Wellington resolved to enter it from three sides at once, forming three distinct combats. General Graham, with a corps of about twenty thousand men, was to attack from the British left, and to pass the Zadora at Ariaga, near the city of Vittoria. Hill was to attack from the right, with an equal force. Wellington stationed himself in the centre, with a rather larger force, which was to descend from the mountain-ridges, to cross the Zadora by various roads, and to march straight upon Vittoria. In fact, the whole battle was merely an attack on a strong army hemmed in, by an army equally strong, and marching to the attack on three sides at the same moment.

At daybreak the English began to move; but the distance to Vittoria was several miles, and every step was to be contended for. Hill reached the village of Puebla about ten in the morning; pushed on, fighting hard, till he gained the village of Subijana de Alàva, and so placed himself in communication with the English centre. Graham had to make a march of several miles to reach Ariaga, near Vittoria; but about one o'clock his attack began to tell. This was a serious one for the French; for, if successful, it would cut them off from the great road to Bayonne. King Joseph, finding both his flanks thus threatened, sent an order to the centre to retire. But the troops were fiercely engaged, and retreat was difficult. Meanwhile, however, the three attacks of the English, right, left, and centre, were all succeeding; and step by step, the French were being pushed back upon Vittoria.

"At six o'clock," says Napier, "the French reached the last defensible height in front of Vittoria. Behind them was the plain in which the city stood, and beyond

the city were thousands of carriages and animals, and of men, women, and children, crowded together in all the madness of terror; and as the English shot went booming overhead, the vast crowd started and swerved with a convulsive movement, while a dull and horrid cry of distress arose; but there was no hope, no stay for army or multitude, it was the wreck of a nation!" Still, the courage of the French soldiers was unquelled. Their artillery for a time kept the allies in check, but suddenly the fourth English division, rushing forward, carried a hill on the left, and the heights were at once abandoned. Joseph, finding the main road so completely blocked up by carriages that the artillery could not pass, indicated the road of Salvatierra as the line of retreat, and the army went off in a confused and yet compact body on that side, leaving Vittoria on its left. The British infantry followed hard, and the light cavalry galloped through the town to intercept the new line of retreat. All became disorder and confusion, the guns were left, while the artillerymen fled with the horses. Vehemently and closely did the British pursue, and nothing could stop their victorious career until night and the disappearance of the flying masses had ended the struggle. The French lost all their artillery, all their baggage, all their equipages, all their stores, treasures, and papers, "so that no man," says a French writer, "could prove even how much pay was due to him. Generals and subordinate officers were alike reduced to the clothes on their backs, and many of them were barefooted."

"Never was victory more complete. The trophies were innumerable. Marshal Jourdan's baton of command was brought to Lord Wellington, who sent it to the Prince

Regent, from whom he quickly received one of an English marshal in return. The loss of the French was never ascertained; that of the allies was three thousand five hundred and sixty-seven English, one thousand and fifty-nine Portuguese, and five hundred and fifty Spanish. The spoil taken was enormous. "The soldiers of the army," wrote Lord Wellington, "have got among them about a million sterling in money, with the exception of about one hundred thousand dollars found in the military chest." "Rich vestures of all sorts, gold and silver plate, pictures, jewels, parrots, monkeys, and children, lay scattered about the field amidst weeping mothers and wailing children. Joseph himself narrowly escaped; a squadron of dragoons pursued his carriage and fired into it."

All the remaining bodies of the French in Spain fell in the fall of Vittoria. They escaped out of the kingdom by various roads as quickly as possible. "Joseph's reign was over, the crown had fallen from his head, and after years of toils and combats, which had rather been admired than understood, the great English leader, emerging from the chaos of the Peninsular struggle, stood on the summit of the Pyrenees a recognized conqueror. From those lofty pinnacles the clangour of his trumpets pealed clear and loud, and the splendour of his genius appeared as a flaming beacon to warring nations."*

Thus, in some five or six weeks, had a great kingdom been cleared of its invaders and oppressors—not by the power of superior numbers, but by the natural ascendancy of a consummate military genius. "Here," remarks Napier, "was a noble army driven like sheep

* Napier, vol. v. p. 132.

before prowling wolves, although in every action the officers had been prompt and skilful, and the soldiers brave, firm, and obedient. The French troops were excellent and numerous, and the country strong and favourable for defence; but the soul of a great commander was wanting; and hence, the Esla, the Tormes, the Duero, the Carrion, the Pisuerga, seemed to be all dried up, the mountains to be levelled; and sixty thousand veteran soldiers, willing to fight at every step, were hurried with all the tumult and confusion of defeat across the Ebro."

The deliverance of the Peninsula, by a force so far inferior to that of the French, must always remain one of Wellington's greatest glories. The same French writer, whom we have already quoted, Jules Maurel, remarks this surprising fact. He says: "The truth is, that from 1808 to 1813, Wellington never had thirty thousand English under his orders, even at a period when the Imperial armies deluged the Peninsula with not fewer than three hundred and seventy thousand men."

Nor were the results of this great day confined to the Spanish peninsula. Like its predecessor, the victory of Salamanca, the battle of Vittoria shook the whole continent of Europe. Napoleon himself, holding his ground at Dresden, had, up to this moment, succeeded in withholding Austria from any actual participation in the confederacy against him. He had even succeeded, on the 30th of June, in obtaining a convention for the restoration of peace between himself, Russia, and Prussia. But the very next day the news of the expulsion of the French from Spain reached Dresden, filling Napoleon and his ministers with consternation, and giving new

life and vigour to the Russian and Prussian councils. The allies regretted that any cessation of arms had been agreed to, and they began to long for its termination. The very moment it expired by lapse of time, Austria joined the allies, war was actively resumed, and the autumn had not ended before Napoleon had been driven across the Rhine, and Germany freed from the presence of the French armies.

The French writer from whom we have just quoted, —Jules Maurel, thus notices this remarkable passage in modern history.

"Scarcely had the armistice been signed when intelligence arrived that the French had lost everything in Spain. In forty days Wellington had turned, one after another, all the positions occupied by the French armies of the centre, of the south and of the north, and had crossed the Tormes, the Douro, the Esla, the Carrion, and the Ebro. He had reached Vittoria; he had gained a decisive battle; he had expelled King Joseph from the Peninsula, and had planted his army on the Pyrenees. In the beginning of May he was in Portugal; on the 23rd of June he was on the frontiers of France. The defeat of Vittoria entirely neutralized the victories of Lutzen and Bautzen, and at once restored the coalition."

XII.

WATERLOO.

A.D. 1815.

We have, in the preceding chapters, described the three several stages by which the Duke of Wellington had conducted the British army to that elevated position in which the peace of 1814 left it. We have seen how it had, first, on the broad fields of Castile, boldly encountered a French army of twice its strength, and had sent it back in defeat. Next, at Salamanca, meeting an army of equal force, it had scattered it by an assault of a single hour; annihilating at a blow one half of its strength. And lastly, falling upon the intrusive king himself in his final position of retreat and defence at Vittoria, it had driven his entire array, like a flock of frightened sheep, over the Pyrenees. After these triumphs, by which a whole realm of great extent had been delivered from its invaders, there seemed scarcely any way by which the fame and honour of the British army and its illustrious commander could be enhanced; except by an event not to be anticipated;—an encounter with the great conqueror of modern times, now an exile at Elba; and a triumph over him in a befitting field and at the head of a formidable army.

This event, however unlikely it might seem, was reserved for England's soldiers and her general; and it occurred in less than a year after the apparent restora-

tion of peace. Napoleon suddenly left his island-home, reappeared in France, gathered his soldiers round him, and re-entered Paris as once more its emperor. Naturally enough, the sovereigns who had compelled his retirement, scarcely nine months before, resolved to maintain their position; and they covenanted with each other to place armies amounting to six hundred thousand men on the soil of France in the course of July 1815. The British portion of this force was collecting together in the months of May and June, under the duke's command; when Napoleon determined not to wait for the attack, but to carry the war into the allied territories; and, accordingly, in the second week in June he entered Belgium. Before he had proceeded twenty miles he encountered both the English and the Prussian armies; and on the fourth day, at a distance of about thirty miles from the French frontier, was fought the great and decisive battle of WATERLOO.

This momentous contest will require of us a more lengthened description than we have given of any of the preceding battles; both because it was an event of the highest possible importance to the fate of England, of Europe, and of the world; and also because it was, so to speak, a succession of battles fought on one field, and on the same day. In a former case we have seen "an army of forty thousand men defeated in forty minutes;" but here the deadly strife occupied nearly ten hours. The French opened the attack at eleven in the morning, and at nine o'clock at night the last of their battalions had not yet quitted the field. In the course of these ten hours four or five desperate and prolonged contests had taken place; each of which might have been justly called a battle. It will be impossible,

therefore, to give any fair or complete idea of this long-continued struggle, without occupying much greater space than is required for an ordinary battle.

It is also a history which is thickly strewn with controversies. The defeated general himself was the first to open this wordy strife. The loss of the fight of Waterloo was a fact to which he never could be reconciled. That battle hurled him, finally, from the throne on which he had for a second time seated himself; and sent him to wear out the few remaining years of his life on the rock of St. Helena. In that retirement he occupied himself, for the most part, in a series of efforts to resuscitate his extinguished "glory."* In these attempts he was hampered by no moral scruples; for, as Emerson has remarked, "this, the highest-placed individual in the world, had not the merit of common truth and honesty; he would steal, slander, assassinate, as his interest indicated." Any reasonable man, therefore, will read his "Historical Memoir," book ix., written at St. Helena, and published in London in 1820, with that caution which is so plainly called for when a document is confessedly an *exparte* statement, and written by one who is known to be of unscrupulous character.

Yet that document has been received in many quarters with a credulity which is somewhat surprising. It is true that this credulity may be accounted for in the case of the French historians,—who, obliged to confess that their defeat at Waterloo was "horrible;"—a "massacre;"—a "deluge of blood,"—are glad to have supplied

* A French writer tells us that, when he had dictated, at Paris, the bulletin of this battle, he finished by exclaiming, with a groan, "It was lost, and *my glory* with it!"

to them, under Napoleon's own hand, the apology that he was overmatched and greatly outnumbered; and that yet, after all, he would have proved victorious if one of his generals had not disobeyed his commands.

The latter of these two pleas has been generally rejected by English writers,—utterly denied as its truth has been by the party so accused. But, strangely enough, although there was every probability that Napoleon's account of his own strength, and of that of his opponent, would be wholly untrustworthy,—several of our best English writers have given entire credence to his statement of the real amount of his army; even while those statements are clearly refuted by abundant testimonies of many Frenchmen. And this point is not an immaterial one. For if we could admit the truth of Napoleon's final conclusion, that "On that day sixty-nine thousand French beat one hundred and twenty thousand men; and the victory was only torn from them between eight and nine o'clock at night by the increase of the allies to one hundred and fifty thousand men,"*—what merit could we assign to the British soldiers, or to their great commander, for such a victory? But, in sober verity, of all the falsehoods deliberately put forth by Napoleon in the course of his life, this, probably, is nearly the greatest.

Let us, however, now endeavour to arrange our narrative in its proper order. The army which was assembling in Belgium under the duke's command, had reached, in the beginning of June, the respectable amount of almost one hundred thousand men. It contained, however, far more Belgians, Hanoverians, Brunswickers, and Dutchmen, than of British troops, and far more

* Hist. Memoirs, book ix. p. 209.

new levies, landwehr, and militia, than of experienced soldiers. The English regiments which had followed the duke through all the fields of Spain had been sent to America, and were now on the Atlantic, on their return home. He had some of the Guards, and a few other regiments of some standing; but the largest portion of the British troops which had yet reached Belgium were second battalions—new recruits drafted from the militia:—and the same observation would apply to the Hanoverians and other auxiliaries.

It was a knowledge of this intrinsic weakness of the duke's army, and of the fact that ten or fifteen thousand of his old Peninsular troops would soon join him, that decided Napoleon, as is frankly confessed,* to make a sudden attack on the British and Prussian forces before they were fully prepared to meet him. Silently, therefore, but with his usual skill and rapidity, Napoleon brought together a powerful army, and on the morning of the 15th of June he moved forward and entered Belgium.

And here we are met by one of the most current of all the fictions which are connected with this history. A variety of writers have repeated, one after another,—Napoleon himself setting them the example,—the story that the duke never heard of the approach of the French until eleven o'clock in the evening of that day,

* "Information which might be depended upon, had made known the position of the Allies in all particulars."—*Fleury*, vol. ii. p. 161.

"To anticipate the Allies, and to commence hostilities *before they were ready*, it was necessary to take the field on the 15th of June."—*Hist. Memoir*, Book ix. p. 59.

"The period of the arrival of the English army from America was known. The allied armies could not be in readiness to act simultaneously until July."—*Gourgaud's Campaign*, p. 29.

while at a ball at Brussels. The facts, however, which are beyond dispute, are these,—that the French did not enter Charleroi, the first Belgian town, until eleven or twelve o'clock on June the 15th;—that tidings of their movement reached the duke at Brussels by three o'clock, and that between four and five o'clock that same afternoon, orders went out to every corps of the British army to move to the front; many of them beginning their march that same evening. There was no surprise, then, nor was there the loss of a single day. The French had not marched thirty miles,—had not entered any place of the least importance, when on the third day, they found the British army drawn up across their path, and had to fight the battle of Waterloo.

They had, indeed, found their progress arrested still earlier. Entering Belgium on the 15th, they were stopped the very next day at Ligny by the Prussians, at Quatre Bras by a part of the English army. Marshal Blucher being defeated, and retiring a few miles, the duke fell back also, and thus was enabled to draw up his army at Waterloo, a position which he had before observed to be an advantageous one, and which was in all respects well suited to the defence of Brussels.

It was on the afternoon of the 17th of June that the duke's army found itself assembled on this spot. The French army, led by Napoleon himself, soon approached, but the day was too far advanced to afford time for a general engagement. The two armies, therefore, took position, the English on a rising ground called Mont St. Jean, about half a mile in advance of the village of Waterloo, and nine miles on the French side of Brussels: the French on a series of heights facing Mont St. Jean, having the village of Planchenoit on the right, and

looking down upon a small valley which separated the two hosts.

And now we are naturally brought to a consideration of the question, what was the respective strength of these two armies? This is a point upon which Napoleon has bestowed great pains in his "Historical Memoir, Book ix.," and on which he has succeeded in deluding many English writers.

As to the strength of the British army, there can be no kind of doubt upon that point, for the actual numbers present in each battalion and squadron was carefully recorded; and these records were needed to establish the respective rights of all present to honours and rewards. We have spoken of a gross amount of nearly one hundred thousand men. But of these, several thousands were required to garrison Antwerp, Ostend, Nieuport, Ypres, Tournai, and Mons,—the loss at Quatre Bras had been three or four thousand, and a corps of observation posted at Hal, consisted of nearly six thousand. When these deductions were made, not quite seventy thousand men remained, to meet Napoleon's attack at Waterloo.

The British infantry in the field were fifteen thousand one hundred and eighty-one, and the German Legion infantry were three thousand three hundred and one. The British and German cavalry were seven thousand eight hundred and forty, and their artillery was three thousand four hundred and ninety-three. Thus the whole reliable force of the duke—the force to which he must look to stand the French attack—was not quite thirty thousand men. All this was well known to Napoleon, who, in his "Book ix.," says, "Victory appeared to be *certain*," for the French army consisted of "good troops,

while, in the enemy's army, the English only, amounting to forty thousand *at most*, could be reckoned upon as such."*

The "allied troops" who made up the duke's array, consisted of ten thousand seven hundred and fifty-five Hanoverians, many of whom were mere landwehr or militia, and nearly twenty-five thousand Belgians, Dutch, and men of Brunswick and Nassau. Some of these fought gallantly, but others retreated whenever the French approached,—some actually flying from the field. Hence Napoleon justly says, "one Englishman might be counted for one Frenchman:—two Dutchmen, Prussians, or soldiers of the Confederation, for one Frenchmen."

Adopting, therefore, Napoleon's own method of calculation, we may say, that the duke had an army nominally amounting to about sixty-eight thousand men, but really equal to something less than fifty thousand.

And now we turn to the other side of the account. Here we must, to be safe, accept only French testimony. If we draw together all the credible statements of this class that we can find, we shall probably be able to arrive at a just conclusion.

There was published at Paris, in 1815, a volume by an officer attached to the staff, which may be considered to be "the French account," at the time and in detail, of this battle. In this volume, the whole army which entered Belgium is stated to have been "one hundred and fifty thousand effective men, of whom about thirty thousand were cavalry." It seems improbable that a staff-officer should have greatly erred, or that a Frenchman should have exaggerated the strength of the beaten army. Reckoning, therefore, the gross number to have been one

* Hist. Memoir, Book ix. p. 127.

hundred and fifty thousand; and deducting fifteen thousand for losses at Ligny, and at Quatre Bras, we may estimate the force detached under Grouchy on the 17th, at about thirty-eight or forty thousand men, and the strength of the French army at Waterloo at something more than ninety thousand.

And this estimate precisely agrees with Napoleon's own statement, written at Paris three days after the battle. In this bulletin he says, "We estimated the force of the English army at eighty thousand men. We *supposed* that a Prussian corps which *might be* in line towards the right might be fifteen thousand men. The enemy's force, then, was upwards of ninety thousand men: ours, less numerous."

He is here speaking of the morning. But there was not a Prussian soldier in the field until five o'clock in the afternoon: and this Napoleon well knew. Why, then, does he here introduce a "supposed" Prussian corps? Clearly, in order to bring up the allied force to ninety-five thousand men, so that he might be able to add, "Ours, *less numerous*." He had every possible motive, as a beaten general striving to make the best of his case,—for saying, *if he had dared*,—"The enemy was more than ninety thousand strong, but we had not quite seventy thousand." But he could not venture, in the face of abundant evidence then existing, to say that his army was less than eighty thousand, the force he assigns to the English. He therefore, by an "ingenious device," augments the allied force to ninety-five thousand; and then he can venture to assert that his own army was inferior in numbers. There is clearly implied in this statement, an admission, that his own force was not greatly below ninety-five thousand.

Yet, when Ney and others were dead, and the records, in all probability, scattered or destroyed, the same man who wrote this bulletin, concocted at St. Helena, four or five years after, a widely-different account. In his "Book ix." p. 128, he puts forth an elaborate table, purporting to show, that the whole force of the French army at Waterloo was only sixty-eight thousand six hundred and fifty men! And such has been the imposing effect of this table, that many English writers, while they could detect the falsehood of other statements in that same volume, still accepted, as an undeniable fact, the conclusion, that Napoleon's army at Waterloo consisted of only sixty-eight thousand six hundred and fifty men! Yet only common prudence, and the use of a little careful scrutiny, was needed, to prove that these same elaborate tables in "Book ix." were nothing more than what is usually called, in railway-language, "a cooked account."

The proof of this shall be given from French writers alone. And, first, let "Book ix." refute itself, by its own self-contradictions. At page 71, it gives the second corps, nineteen thousand eight hundred infantry; while at p. 95—97, it states the same infantry, at the same moment, at twenty-one thousand. At page 128 it gives the first corps sixteen thousand five hundred infantry, and at table F it calls the same infantry, seventeen thousand six hundred. At page 128 the cavalry of the Guard and the third and fourth corps of cavalry are stated at ten thousand; while at pp. 158 and 173 they are twice called twelve thousand. At p. 35 we are told that "the regiments generally had but two battalions; each battalion consisting of six hundred men, *present and under arms.*" Yet in the principal table, F,

the regiments are always estimated at either one thousand or eleven hundred men, the battalions at five hundred or five hundred and fifty. Thus it is abundantly clear, even from the pages of "Book ix." itself, that its writer is one who "plays at fast and loose with figures."

But other refutations, from purely French sources, are abundant. We have seen that Napoleon states, in "Book ix." p. 35, that his battalions had six hundred men; but that he quietly puts them down in table F, as being only five hundred or five hundred and fifty.

Now in his portfolio, captured at Charleroi, and published at Brussels, there was one report, made by an officer named De Launoy, and dated "Montalimert, June 4," which said, "The first battalion, seven hundred and twenty strong, marched on the 1st of June." And, in the *Moniteur* of May 28, published at Paris under Napoleon's own authority, there was given a letter dated "Lille, May 26," which says, "Our garrison is entirely composed of battalions of select troops, which successively arrive: the twentieth arrived yesterday: almost all consist of seven hundred and twenty men: we are expecting two battalions of veterans." Now these troops formed part of the first corps, as stated in "Book ix." p. 31; and in table F they are all set down as having in each battalion, five hundred and fifty men!

It was of this first corps that Marshal Ney spoke in his letter of June 26, 1815, in which he complained of having it taken away from him on the 16th. He describes it as having consisted of "between twenty-five and thirty thousand men." He must have had the actual returns in his pocket when he wrote this. Now if the battalions generally consisted of seven

hundred and twenty men, as the *Moniteur* of May 28 had told us, then its thirty-two battalions would have contained twenty-three thousand and forty men; which added to fourteen hundred cavalry, and fifteen hundred and sixty-four artillery-men, would be accurately described as "between twenty-five and thirty thousand men." But Napoleon, in his statement of the force at Waterloo, sets down the infantry of this corps as only sixteen thousand five hundred; thus contradicting, at once, the statement of the *Moniteur*, the report found in his own portfolio, and the declaration of the Marshal who commanded that corps!

In the same spirit, in the table of the troops at Waterloo, (Book ix. p. 128,) we find the infantry of the Guard set down as being eleven thousand five hundred. Yet Gourgaud, Napoleon's aide-de-camp, and Fleury de Chaboulon, his secretary, both concur in stating this infantry to have been fourteen thousand.*

Of the heavy cavalry we have already seen, that while Napoleon, in his table, at p. 128, sets it down at 4000, 3000, and 3000, or 10,000 in all, he afterwards twice describes it, at p. 158 and at p. 173, as "these twelve thousand select horse."

Once more, in "Book ix.," p. 129, he states the force detached under Grouchy to have been thirty-four thousand three hundred. His own companion at St. Helena, General Montholon, in his history, (vol. i. p. 14,) calls this force forty-two thousand.

All this evidence, then, drawn from several quarters, but wholly French, points to one conclusion,—namely, that Napoleon, in forming his tables for "Book ix.," deliberately reduced his real strength at Waterloo by

* Gourgaud, p. 38; Fleury, vol. ii. p. 167.

about one-fourth or one-fifth; and that his first statement, in his bulletin issued at the time, was the true one; namely, that his army was only somewhat "less numerous than ninety-five thousand."

And to this conclusion a remarkable support is found, in the behaviour of the two generals on the day preceding the action. Wellington had beaten nearly every one of Napoleon's marshals;*—and could not but feel a degree of exultation at the thought of meeting the master of them all. Napoleon, on his part, had to encounter a general who had never been conquered. Supposing, then, the armies to have been nearly equal in strength, what might have been anticipated, but a degree of eager anticipation on Wellington's side, and of seriousness on Napoleon's? Instead of which, what do we hear? The duke writes to Marshal Blucher, that he will accept battle, *if* the marshal will assist him with one corps of his army. Meanwhile, Napoleon's only anxiety is lest the English should escape him. "He was surprised," writes his secretary, Fleury, "when daylight discovered to him that the English army had not quitted its positions, but appeared disposed to accept battle." "He returned to his head-quarters (Book ix. p. 125) full of satisfaction at the great fault committed by the enemy's general." "He held this," says Brialmont, "to be rashness, and a fault, exclaiming, 'At last, then, I have them,—these English!'" Do not these views and anticipations, on the part of both of the generals, make it quite evident that each of them was fully aware of the great supe-

* Junot, at Roliça and Vimiera; Victor at Talavera; Massena at Busaco; Ney, after Torres Vedras; Marmont at Salamanca; Jourdan at Vittoria; and Soult in the Pyrenees, Toulouse, &c. &c.

riority of the French army; and of the temerity of which the duke would be guilty if, without any assurance of support, he ventured on an engagement in the face of such odds?

It is worth remark, too, that while several of the best English writers have accepted with the most good-natured simplicity, Napoleon's own account of the force with which he fought this battle—French historians, even when admirers of Napoleon, show much less faith in his assertions. Thus, Lamartine, having Napoleon's IXth Book before him, in which the number, "sixty-eight thousand, six hundred and fifty men," is strenuously insisted on—quietly disregards the fiction, and repeatedly speaks of the French force as being "eighty thousand men." *

But Napoleon's "*certainty* of success," of which he speaks at p. 127 of his Book ix., rested more upon the superior *quality* of his troops than on their superior *numbers*. He was thoroughly well aware, both of the slight value of the Belgian and Hanoverian auxiliaries, and of the excellence of his own troops. And the duke, also, knew full well both of these facts. On the 8th of May he had written to Lord Stewart, "I have got an infamous army; very weak and ill-equipped; and a very inexperienced staff." And seven days after the battle, he repeated to Lord Bathurst, that he had got "not only the worst troops, but the worst-equipped army, with the worst staff, that ever was brought together." †

On the other hand, Napoleon's army was, for its amount, the finest that he had ever led into the field. Thus his secretary, Fleury, says, "The whole army was

* History of the Restoration, vol. ii. p. 377, 388.
† Despatches, vol. viii. p. 168.

superb, and full of ardour." Lamartine speaks of it as "his grand army of chosen men; every battalion of which had a soul equal to the utmost extremity." Napoleon himself, in "Book ix.," says: "The spectacle was really magnificent: the earth seemed proud of being trod by such intrepid combatants." And at St. Helena he told O'Meara: "My troops were so good, that I esteemed them sufficient to beat a hundred and twenty thousand."*

Thus, as Brialmont remarks, whatever might be the numerical proportion of the two armies, "when we come to look at the respective qualities of the troops, the inferiority of the Anglo-Belgian army *was enormous*. Not only was it composed of heterogeneous elements; but it consisted almost entirely of young soldiers, a large proportion of whom had never been under fire. The Hanoverian contingent was made up of militia; and many regiments were fit only for garrison duty."†

The evening which preceded the memorable 18th of June was dark and cloudy; the rain fell in torrents, and the men were often ankle-deep in water. But, however deplorable might be their outward condition, the interest of this eventful moment rendered the combatants on either side, almost insensible to physical sufferings. Every man in both armies knew that a great and decisive battle was to be fought on the following day. With the opening morning, then, would begin what might prove the final contest,—ending a strife of nations which had lasted more than twenty years. The two greatest generals of the age were for the first time to be brought into collision: the conqueror of Europe was to

* O'Meara, vol. i. p. 464.

† Brialmont's Wellington, vol. ii. p. 440.

measure swords with the deliverer of Spain. No two such leaders, it has been well observed, had confronted each other, since Hannibal and Scipio met at Zama.

Doubtless, and very naturally, the greatest degree of confidence was felt in the camp of the invaders. The French soldiers relied with reason on the extraordinary talents of their great leader, victorious in fifty contests, foiled in scarcely any. The men who stood by his side, too, were the veterans who had marched triumphantly over many victorious fields, and who now felt defeat, under such a captain, to be scarcely possible. They were confident, too, in their numbers. All of them had heard that the emperor had carried over the frontier a picked army of one hundred and fifty thousand men. They saw on the heights around them the first and second corps, amounting together to nearly fifty thousand men, with the sixth, less numerous, in reserve. The Imperial Guard was there, from eighteen to twenty thousand strong,—the finest troops that France had ever possessed, and the cuirassiers, nearly six thousand in number. What could a mixed force of a few English, joined with Belgians, Hanoverians, and Dutchmen, do against such a power?

Very naturally, therefore, we learn from Gourgaud, that "the French troops were full of enthusiasm. Such were the acclamations of joy, that they prevented the orders from being heard."* From Napoleon to his generals, from the generals to the troops, the feeling had spread and become universal. "Ah! we have them, then,—these English!"

The British troops had not the same ground of confi-

* Gourgaud's Waterloo, p. 96.

dence. They knew well that their own numbers did not amount to one-third of the strength of Napoleon's army, and that the Hanoverian and Belgian landwehr, by whom their line was to be filled up, were of very uncertain value. Many of the battalions, both English and foreign, had never been in action before. Still, they had a great and well-founded trust in their commander; and with a spirit like his own, they meant to *do their duty*, and while they lived to stand their ground.

The field of Waterloo, or the heights of Mont St. Jean, as the English and the French respectively call this spot, is a piece of slightly-elevated ground lying, as we have already said, about one thousand yards in advance of the village of Waterloo. Brussels, in which Napoleon intended to sleep that night, was about nine miles in the rear of the English army. The main road from Charleroi to Brussels passed through the French position, descended into the valley, and then ascended Mont St. Jean, cutting the English position at right angles near a farm-house called La Haye Sainte. The English line lay about two hundred yards behind this farm-house. Here was the centre and left centre. In advance of the right wing of the English army, and between it and the left wing of the French, stood a larger house, surrounded by walled gardens and orchards, and called Hougoumont. As this place would have afforded great advantages to the French in preparing attacking columns, the duke placed in it some companies of the foot-guards, with some Nassau and Hanoverian troops, and enjoined its resolute defence. Well were his orders obeyed, for the utmost efforts of a whole army corps of the French were ineffectual to carry this position. The French lost six or eight thousand men in the attempt, but up to the

very close of the day the English foot-guards maintained their possession.

The position of Waterloo was deliberately chosen by the duke, and the choice is commended by all unprejudiced critics. Yet Napoleon, ungenerous throughout, strives to depreciate his antagonist's judgment in this particular. He says, in "Book ix:"—"The English general had in his rear the defiles of the forest of Soignes, so that if beaten, retreat was impossible" (p. 125). Upon which M. Lamartine observes: "In fighting on the borders of a forest fortified in all its approaches, as well as by its own impenetrability, the duke had every pledge of victory, if victory was possible; and of a secure retreat if defeat were unavoidable. Waterloo was an admirable field of battle, and it is to be regretted that Napoleon has not acknowledged this, but has obstinately striven to prove that his conqueror was unworthy of him. These are the littlenesses of glory. The choice of Waterloo on Wellington's part was a further mark of that genius, at once resolute, powerful, and prudent, which has characterized all the campaigns of this general."

It should be added, that the duke, during five years of constant warfare with the French armies, had never once been beaten by them in a pitched battle. Nor had he any thought of retreating upon the present occasion, or any desire to make a special provision for such an emergency. In after years he dropped the remark: "I knew that they could never so beat us, but that we could have made good the forest against them."

And now the several divisions of the two armies were placed in the positions which to the two commanders seemed suitable. On the left of Napoleon's line he

placed his second corps, which he himself states to have consisted of seventeen thousand nine hundred men, and which undoubtedly was nearer twenty thousand. This corps, to which his brother Jerome was attached, was ordered to seize upon Hougoumont, and then to attack the right of the British army. Napoleon's right wing was formed of his first corps, under Ney's command. This corps had not yet been in action, and was complete. Napoleon sets down its strength as seventeen thousand nine hundred men; but Ney, who commanded it, describes it as "from twenty-five to thirty thousand." In the second line stood the sixth corps, consisting of seven or eight thousand men; the heavy cavalry, of about seven thousand; and in a third line stood the Imperial Guard, which, of cavalry and infantry, had at least eighteen thousand. The artillery numbered more than six thousand men, with two hundred and forty cannon. The entire force was probably described with truth in Napoleon's bulletin of the battle, in which he calls it "less than ninety-five thousand."

Against these the duke had to place in position, on the opposite heights, his fifteen thousand one hundred and eighty-one British infantry, his three thousand three hundred infantry of the German Legion, and about twenty-eight thousand Belgians, Hanoverians, and Brunswickers. Many of these showed themselves, in the battle, unable to stand a French attack. In the second line he had seven thousand eight hundred and forty English and German cavalry, and about four thousand five hundred Belgians, Hanoverians, and Brunswickers. His artillerymen (English, Belgian, &c.,) were five thousand six hundred, and his guns, one hundred and fifty-six. At Hal and Enghien, on the road from Mons

to Brussels, the duke placed a detachment of five thousand eight hundred and nineteen men to guard against any possible device in that quarter. These could take no part in the battle, being fixed by their orders at a distance of several miles from it.

The duke had slept for a few hours at his headquarters in the village of Waterloo, and then rising before dawn on the morning of the 18th he wrote several letters, in which he expressed his confidence that all would go well, but still gave specific orders for all that was to be done in Brussels, Antwerp, &c., in the event of the success of the French attack. He then saw to the distribution of the reserves of artillery, which had been parked in the village, so that supplies should be readily forwarded to every point where they might be needed. He also personally inspected the arrangements made for the reception of the wounded. Then mounting his horse Copenhagen, he rode to Hougoumont, and thence down a lane leading through the wood beyond it. Halting on the eastern slant of the thicket, he narrowly surveyed all of the enemy's arrangements that could be seen. Then giving some final orders at Hougoumont, he galloped back to the high ground in the right centre of his position, where he began to chat with the members of his staff with as much liveliness as if they were about to take part in an ordinary review.

There was now a pause of considerable duration. This was one of the chief mistakes committed by Napoleon. He had before him, as he well knew, an army exceedingly inferior to his own; so inferior, in short, that it was a matter of joyful surprise to him that the duke had not decamped in the night. But on his right he knew that there was Grouchy with less than forty

thousand men, opposed to Blucher, who had eighty or ninety thousand. It was obvious to every one that the Prussian general might, and probably would, engage Grouchy with one or two corps, and carry the rest of his army to the succour of the English. It was, then, a great error not to use the present opportunity with decision and rapidity. He accounts for the delay by the state of the ground; but when Grouchy justified his inertness at Wavre by the same plea, Napoleon exclaims, in "Book ix." p. 153, "The dreadful state of the weather, ridiculous motive!"

The village clock was striking eleven when the first gun was fired from the French centre, and this great battle began, which only ended with the darkness of night. There has never been a battle which was so distinctly divided, like a drama, into four or five acts. These were: 1. The attack on Hougoumont and the English right; 2. The attack on La Haye Sainte, and the English centre and left; 3. The irruption of the French heavy cavalry upon the centre of the English position; 4. The Prussian diversion; 5. The charge of the Imperial Guard, and final defeat of the French army. These several acts or stages in this great contest usually followed each other at intervals of about two hours, *i. e.* at 11, at 1, at 3, at 5, and at 7 o'clock. There cannot, therefore, be a better way of obtaining a clear idea of the progress of this tremendous struggle, than by passing in review these five acts or stages, just as they occurred, and distinctly from each other.

ELEVEN O'CLOCK.

Precisely at this hour the French artillery opened fire upon the orchards of Hougoumont, and Jerome, with his

division, moved forward to the attack. As we have seen, Napoleon himself assigns to his second corps, to whom this duty was assigned, a strength of seventeen thousand nine hundred men; and, reasoning upon his uniform practice of diminishing his real numbers, we may safely estimate its real force at twenty thousand. This corps was to storm and take Hougoumont, and then, from this position, to annoy, and perhaps to attack with success, the duke's right. But it never succeeded even in its first object. The whole power of these eighteen or twenty thousand men failed to carry a post which was never garrisoned by so many as two thousand. Thus, Gourgaud tells us that at noon, "Prince Jerome with his division took possession of the wood: he was driven out, but a new attack once more rendered him master of it. The enemy, however, kept possession of the large house in the centre." Again, at half-past four, he says, "General Reille supported the attack of Jerome's division by Foy's division. (Each being five or six thousand strong). Howitzers had set fire to the house and nearly destroyed it; three-fourths of the wood was in our possession; the fields were strewed with the English guards, the flower of the enemy's army." But beyond this partial success the French never attained. They never carried the chateau itself, but in the attempt they lost from six to eight thousand men, while the killed and wounded of the defenders amounted to a few hundreds only. This portion of the battle lasted from noon until night, and all that the French could boast of, was, that with five or seven times the number of the British, they obtained possession of "three-fourths of the wood."* Napoleon says, in "Book ix.,"

* The first French attack was repulsed about two o'clock: but

"The wood remained in the possession of the French; but the chateau, in which some hundreds of intrepid English troops defended themselves, opposed an invincible resistance."*

ONE O'CLOCK.

But now, having commenced the battle by this vehement assault on Hougoumont by his left wing, Napoleon prepared what he admits to be his main attack, on the duke's centre and left, by Count d'Erlon's whole corps, led by Marshal Ney. This was the corps which had not been engaged at either Ligny or Quatre Bras. Napoleon states its strength at seventeen thousand nine hundred; but Ney more frankly describes it as between "twenty-five and thirty thousand." This force was directed against the centre of the English position. Throughout the day Napoleon seemed to rely on *mere strength*. He knew that he was superior on every point, in each branch of the service, and in every particular, and he had never experienced the obstinate endurance of the English infantry. Thus, as the duke afterwards said, "He did not manœuvre at all. He just moved forward, in the old style, in columns, and was driven off in the old style."

Great were the expectations based on this attack. Napoleon himself said to Ney: "This is a day and an action worthy of you: I give you the command of the centre; and it is you who are to gain the battle."† But while all the French accounts admit the vast im-

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Bonaparte renewed it five or six times, until about seven o'clock in the evening.—*Austrian Account.*

* Hist. Memoir, book ix. p. 143.

† Lamartine, b. xxv. § 34.

portance which was attached to this, the main attack, they entirely forget to say *what was the result of it*. Thus Gourgaud writes; "The emperor directed Marshal Ney to commence the attack, and to take possession of La Haye Sainte;" "Our infantry advanced;" "The enemy's line, however, made no manœuvre; it maintained its immobility. His cavalry made several successful charges on the flank of one of the columns of the first corps, and about fifteen of our pieces of artillery, which were advancing, were driven back into a hollow road. One of Milhaud's brigades of Cuirassiers advanced against this cavalry, and the field of battle was soon covered with their slain. When the emperor perceived that some disorder prevailed on our right, he proceeded thither at full gallop."*

Napoleon says, in "Book ix.," "Many charges of infantry and cavalry followed; the detail of them belongs more to the history of each regiment, than to the general history of the battle; it is enough to say, that after three hours' fighting, the farm of La Haye Sainte was occupied by the French infantry; while the end which the emperor had in view was obtained."†

Thus, from the French accounts, we gain no intelligible information as to the actual result of this attack of twenty-five thousand men on the English centre; except, indeed, that Gourgaud's single phrase, "the enemy's line maintained its immobility," tacitly implies that the attack failed. We turn, then, to the

* Gourgaud's Campaign of Waterloo, p. 97.

† Page 151. This attack on the centre was made at one o'clock, and La Haye Sainte was not evacuated by the English till six in the evening. Of what occurred in the five hours which intervened the French accounts are ominously silent.

English narrators, and learn from them what actually occurred.

"Seventy-four guns" ("Book ix." says eighty) were ordered forward to a little elevation, so as to bring their fire to bear upon the English line at a range of about seven hundred yards. Soon after, as two o'clock approached, the columns of attack, under Ney's command, were seen descending from their elevated ground, crossing the valley, and ascending the northern slope. The British artillery gave them a warm reception; but still the columns pressed on, until they approached the duke's line, near the centre and left centre. Here were placed the brigade of Sir Thomas Picton, about three thousand strong; and a Belgic-Dutch brigade under Bylandt. As the French columns drew near, with shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" the courage of the Belgians gave way, and the whole brigade, amidst the groans and hootings of the British soldiers, began a hasty movement to the rear, from which they could not be induced to advance during the whole remainder of the day.

Left thus to himself, to sustain the whole attack of twice or three times his numbers, the gallant Picton never hesitated. Forming his little band two deep, he waited till the French column came within charging distance. It then halted, and endeavoured to deploy into line. Saluting it, at this moment, with a volley from his whole brigade, Picton gave the word "Charge!" and his men sprang forward with the bayonet. In an instant the whole French column was in confusion; and before they had time to recover themselves, Ponsonby's brigade of heavy cavalry, the Royals, the Scots Greys, and the Enniskilleners, broke in upon them, and in a

few moments the whole side of the hill was covered with fugitives. The heroic leader of "the fighting division," however, the gallant Picton, fell, shot through the brain in the moment of triumph. Another fierce encounter was at hand. Milhaud's Cuirassiers were close behind the French columns, and they essayed to retrieve the fight. But the Household Brigade met them, and after a desperate encounter—of the best horsemen in England and the best in France—the whole mass of the French, horse and foot, were driven back in confusion, leaving behind them the eagles of the 45th and 105th regiments, and nearly three thousand prisoners. The grand attack of Ney on the British centre had failed; and the first corps of the French army was so seriously cut up and disorganized, as to be in no condition to renew the attack. We now understand Gourgaud's confessions, "The enemy's cavalry made several successful charges on the flank of one of the columns of the first corps;" and, "when the emperor perceived that some disorder prevailed on our right, he proceeded thither at full gallop."

It was now considerably past two o'clock. The principal attack had been repelled: the English position had not been forced, or even endangered. "The enemy's line," says Gourgaud, "maintained its immobility." But Napoleon's second corps had been beaten and much damaged at Hougoumont; and now his first was crippled and nearly disabled in front of La Haye Sainte. In this strait, either Ney or Napoleon, or both of them, still confident in their superior strength, had recourse to a desperate measure, which had, indeed, a probability of success; but which, if it failed, would involve a serious danger.

They had, still untouched, or nearly so, a reserve of what Napoleon himself styles, "twelve thousand select horse," the two corps of Cuirassiers, the light cavalry of the Guard, and the horse grenadiers and dragoons of the Guard. There need be no dispute as to the strength of this force, since Napoleon himself twice states it to have been twelve thousand.

THREE O'CLOCK.

At this period of the battle, then, desperate at the two failures on the left and on the right, either Ney or his master launched this enormous mass of "select cavalry" against the centre of the British line. The error, if it is one, is sought by Napoleon to be charged on somebody else. In his bulletin, written at the time, he says:—

"Our two divisions of cuirassiers being engaged, all our cavalry ran at the same moment to support their comrades."

Gourgaud endeavours to cast the blame upon Ney, saying:—

"Marshal Ney, borne away by excess of ardour, lost sight of the orders he had received; he debouched on the level height, which was immediately crowned by two divisions of Milhaud's cuirassiers, and the light cavalry of the Guard. The emperor observed to Marshal Soult, "This is a premature movement, which may be attended with fatal consequences.'"

These accounts would represent Napoleon himself, famous for his rapidity and decision, to have had no command over his own troops. They are, therefore, not credible.

But remembering that Napoleon was himself at this moment in a forward position, and that the heavy cavalry

placed in the rear as a reserve force must have defiled past him, we must at least believe him to have permitted this movement. Gourgaud says that Ney ordered forward Milhaud's Cuirassiers, and that "the emperor ordered Kellerman's corps to support him." Colonel Heymes, aide-de-camp to Ney, says, "That movement took place under the eyes of the emperor, who might have stopped it, but did not." Still as he afterwards, in private conversation, charged the fault on Ney,* we must suppose that the marshal, in his desperation, called for the reserve of cavalry, and that Napoleon permitted him to employ them. However this might be, it is certain that about three or four o'clock—the attack of the first corps on the centre and left of the English having failed, the whole mass of the "cavalry of reserve" was brought forward and thrown upon the centre of the duke's position. Such an assault has rarely been made upon any other army in modern times. Deducting the troops in Hougoumont, and the losses from four hours' fighting, there could not have been at this moment so many as twelve thousand British infantry in the whole line. Yet it is from Napoleon's own narrative that we learn, that upon this weak array there was launched a mass of twelve thousand heavy horse, six thousand of whom wore armour, and who seemed, in their united strength, able positively to ride down the insignificant force of resolute soldiers who still kept the heights of Mont St. Jean.

The British accounts generally divide this tremendous onset of the cavalry into two attacks, the first, between three and four o'clock, when forty squadrons, twenty-

* Fleury, vol. ii. p. 217.

one of them being composed of cuirassiers, ascended the heights behind La Haye Sainte; the second perhaps an hour later, when the first assailants, having found it difficult to maintain their ground, were rallied behind thirty-seven fresh squadrons sent by Napoleon to their succour. And this agrees with Gourgaud's account, who tells us, first, that "Ney debouched upon the level height, with Milhaud's Cuirassiers and the light cavalry of the Guard," and then adds, a little after, that "the Emperor directed Kellerman's Cuirassiers to support the cavalry on the height lest it should be repulsed." It is clear, therefore, that the first onset of five or six thousand men had failed, or was in danger of failing, when Napoleon sent forward a second, until, as he himself says, the whole "twelve thousand select horse" were involved in the struggle.

How it was that this tremendous attack failed, it is not easy at this distance of time to understand. The whole of the infantry in the British line were quickly formed into squares; the front ranks kneeling and presenting fixed bayonets, and the second and third lines keeping up a constant fire of musketry. The artillery, also, saluted the intruders with grape-shot; but many of the British guns were soon taken possession of by the cuirassiers. The duke, always prepared for every emergency, had instructed the artillerymen that they should, on the approach of danger, take off a wheel and retire with it into the nearest square of infantry. Thus the cuirassiers, when they had seized a gun, found themselves hampered with it, and while they were trying to carry it off, the musketry of the British squares thinned their numbers.

Wellington, in describing the battle in a letter to

Marshal Beresford, said, "I had the infantry for some time in squares, and the French cavalry walking about us as if it had been our own."

There probably never was such a trial of "pluck" as this part of the contest presented. It was a hand-to-hand struggle, *lasting two or three hours.* Had a regiment of cuirassiers ever found courage enough to throw themselves on the British bayonets, there can be little doubt that some of the weaker squares might have been broken. But this never once occurred. Gourgaud, indeed, says, "Our cavalry penetrated many of the enemy's squares, and took three standards," but he must here be speaking of the Belgian or Hanoverian troops, many of whom were unsteady, and some of whom were scattered and cut up. There was, in fact, no absolute reliance to be placed on any but the British troops, and some of the best of the German. A whole Dutch-Belgian brigade, on the approach of the cuirassiers, moved off without firing a shot. After several charges of the British horse upon portions of the French cavalry, Lord Uxbridge put himself at the head of Tripp's brigade of Dutch-Belgian carabineers, and ordered them to charge; and so they did, but not until they had first turned their backs to the enemy! Somewhat later, he ordered forward the Hanoverian regiment called the Cumberland hussars; but the colonel "did not see what good was to be done" by moving him from his snug position, which was out of reach of the firing. He added, that he could not answer for his men, for that they rode their own horses, and could not afford to lose them! Receiving from Lord Uxbridge the vehement reproof which might have been expected, he and his men moved off to Brussels, where they spread the report that the allied

army was destroyed, and that Napoleon was advancing at the head of his Guards!

Yet this tremendous attack failed, as the two preceding attacks had done. And its failure was one chief cause of Napoleon's ruin. He had risked his cavalry reserve, and had lost it. For it is a remarkable and wonderful fact, that, continuing this struggle for two or three hours, this splendid body of "twelve thousand select cavalry" was wholly destroyed. Individuals, and parties of fugitives, doubtless escaped, and their number in the aggregate might be considerable; but this arm of the service was utterly disabled. In his Bulletin, Napoleon said, "For three hours numerous charges were made, several squares penetrated, and six standards taken;—an advantage bearing no proportion to the loss which our cavalry experienced by the grape-shot and musket-firing." Fleury de Chaboulon, his secretary, says, "Our cavalry, exposed to the incessant firing of the enemy's batteries and infantry, sustained and executed numerous brilliant charges, took six flags, and dismounted several batteries; but in this conflict we lost the flower of our intrepid cuirassiers, and of the cavalry of the Guard." He adds, that on reaching Paris, and describing the battle, the emperor said, "Ney behaved like a madman!—he got my cavalry *massacred* for me." And it is the chief complaint of all the French accounts, that when at the close of the day the English horse swept over the field, the emperor had not a single regiment of cavalry to oppose to them!* The "twelve

* At St. Helena, he told O'Meara, "When the English advanced, I had not a single corps of cavalry in reserve to resist them. Hence the English attack succeeded, and all was lost."—*O'Meara*, vol. i. p. 465.

thousand select cavalry" had broken into the English position; but, except as scattered fugitives, they never returned!

FIVE O'CLOCK.

But the battle had now lasted six hours, and Napoleon had allowed his opportunity to pass away. Five o'clock brought the Prussians; and after they had entered the field a decisive victory for Napoleon became impossible.

Bent on his object of proving that he had been not so much beaten as overpowered by numbers, Napoleon in his "Book ix.," brings the Prussians into the field at *noon-day!* In doing this he does not scruple to employ the most direct and obvious falsehood. To give a single instance,—Gourgaud, his *aide-de-camp*, in his account of the battle, thus writes:—

"It was *half-past four o'clock*, and the most vigorous fire was still kept up on every side. *At this moment* General Domont informed his Majesty that he observed Bulow's corps in movement, and that a division of eight or ten thousand Prussians was debouching from the woods of Frischenois."

Yet in "Book ix." Napoleon does not hesitate to say, "At *two o'clock* in the afternoon General Domont had given notice that Bulow formed in three columns; that the enemy appeared to him to be very numerous,—he estimated the corps at forty thousand men."

But he does not even postpone their arrival until two o'clock:—two pages earlier he insists upon it that he saw them, in the distance, at *noon*.* Now as it is

* "It was *noon*, the troops of General Bulow were stationary beyond the extreme right; they appeared to form and wait for their artillery."—*Hist. Mem.* b. ix. p. 150.

absolutely certain that, with the greatest exertion, the earliest of the Prussian brigades were unable to reach the field until half-past four, we may be sure that at twelve o'clock they must have been eight or ten miles off! Hence this passage in "Book ix." must either be a downright fiction; or else Napoleon must have discovered on a distant hill a party of the Prussian staff who had ridden forward to observe the position of affairs, and who must have been magnified by his alarms into an army-corps!

The real time of the arrival of the Prussians is one of the most clearly-defined facts of the whole history. All the witnesses agree upon it. We have just cited Gourgaud's words, that "at half-past four General Domont observed a division of eight to ten thousand Prussians debouching from the woods of Frischenois."

In strict agreement with which the Prussian official account says,

"It was half-past four o'clock. . . . The difficulties of the road had retarded the march of the Prussian columns; so that only two brigades had arrived at the covered position which was assigned them. The generals resolved to begin the attack with the troops which they had at hand."*

And General Drouet, who was at Napoleon's side during the action, said, in his speech in the Chamber of Peers on the 24th of June, 1815,—"The Prussians began to attack us at about half-past five in the afternoon."

It is quite clear, then, and beyond all dispute, that

* The Austrian account says, "About five o'clock, the first cannon-shot of the Prussian army was fired from the heights of Aguiers."

the Prussians first began to enter the field of battle, and to be visible to the French at half-past four in the afternoon;—that the Prussian commanders immediately proceeded to make arrangements for an attack;—and that their first collision with the French troops took place about half past five in the afternoon.

But Napoleon had been forewarned of their approach; for his flying parties had brought in, he tells us, two or three hours before, a Prussian hussar who was bearing a letter to the Duke of Wellington, announcing that General Bulow and his corps were on their march. Hence Napoleon had already set apart his sixth corps, under Count Lobau, to receive the Prussians whenever they should make their appearance.

He introduces at this period many complaints of Marshal Grouchy, who, he pretends, ought to have followed Bulow's corps, and have taken part in the battle of Waterloo. This is the very height of injustice and absurdity; since he had employed Grouchy distinctly to follow and occupy the attention of the main body of the Prussian army; and in obedience to this command the marshal was at that moment engaged with the Prussian third corps at Wavre. But, on looking at Napoleon's first bulletin of the battle, we see that this aspersion of Grouchy is an afterthought,—a mere device to lessen his own defeat. Writing at the time, and giving to France a full account of the battle, in that bulletin *not one word* of any default of Grouchy's appears.

This, of itself, is enough to show the hollowness of the excuse for the loss of the battle. Grouchy himself, when the "IXth Book" made its appearance, instantly wrote and published an indignant denial of its statements; and Brialmont remarks, that "Napoleon has so expressed

himself as to make it clear that he was anxious to diminish the amount of his own responsibility by sacrificing the reputation of his subordinates. Thus he pretends that he received on the night of the 17th a letter from Grouchy, which letter *never could have existed.*"

But Gourgaud himself, Napoleon's own aide-de-camp, is the best witness in exculpation of Grouchy. He tells us, that in the afternoon, hearing the cannonade of Waterloo, General Excelmans urged upon Grouchy to leave following the Prussians and to march towards the cannonade. But Grouchy, "though he burnt with desire to take part in the great battle, *showed Excelmans his instructions*, which were to march upon Wavre, and said, that he could not take such a responsibility on himself."* It is clear therefore, that up to the afternoon of the 18th Grouchy had no other orders than those which bade him follow the Prussians who were in position at Wavre.

Grouchy then, was not at Waterloo, simply because Napoleon had sent him to Wavre, a town some twelve miles distant; and because he was there engaged in a struggle with the third Prussian corps. But the fourth Prussian corps was at Waterloo at five o'clock, because Blucher had promised to send it there, and because Wellington expected it; and gave battle with inferior forces, relying on this assistance. Napoleon ought to have foreseen the probability of all this,—and, foreseeing it, he ought to have delivered his blows more rapidly, so as to break the English line, if that were possible, before the Prussians could enter the field. But now that he had allowed his opportunity to pass, and now that Bulow was actually beginning to take part in the

* Gourgaud's Campaign of 1815, p. 113.

battle,—what was the respective strength ranged on either side? This question must be answered; for Napoleon says, "The enemy's army had just been augmented by thirty thousand men, already ranged on the field of battle; thus placing one hundred and twenty thousand men against sixty-nine thousand, or two to one." (p. 148.) And then he immediately afterwards adds, "It was *noon*."

This statement, however, like most of Napoleon's other statements, is untrue. The duke's army had never amounted to seventy thousand men, of whom some ten or fifteen thousand were merely nominal combatants, whom it was impossible to persuade to fight. And Napoleon wilfully overlooks the plain averment of the Prussian official account, that when their commanders began the attack,—not at *noon*, but some time after half-past four,—*only two brigades* had arrived on the field. Captain Siborne, who took the greatest pains to ascertain every fact of the case, states that at half-past four o'clock the Prussian force which had come up, amounted to sixteen thousand men; which, added to the duke's army of sixty-eight thousand, made a joint force of about eighty-four thousand; but, if the non-fighting part of the duke's army were deducted, —of scarcely seventy thousand. Thus, even with the addition of the newly-arrived Prussians, the allied force was still numerically weaker than Napoleon's army.

This diversion, however, which was caused so opportunely by Bulow's arrival, naturally brought great relief to the British line. It drew off Count Lobau's corps, the sixth, of seven thousand men, which might otherwise have been sent forward to attack the British centre. The remark, however, which is sometimes

made, that "the English were saved by the arrival of the Prussians," is singularly absurd. Bulow's arrival was not an unexpected thing; or a lucky chance;—it was a part of the duke's plan. He had demanded this aid of Blucher, and had obtained the promise of it, and without this aid, his acceptance of battle would have been an act of great temerity. The arrival of the Prussians, so far from being unexpected, had been calculated on three hours earlier; Blucher having promised that they should be in the field by two o'clock.

And sorely had they been needed. The "thin red line" of the British infantry had scarcely ever found it so difficult to maintain its ground. At this moment, as we have already remarked, there could not have been so many as twelve thousand of this branch of the duke's army left in position. And yet upon them rested the whole burden of the battle. Some of the German troops behaved gallantly; but of the mixed mass of twenty-five thousand Belgians, Hanoverians, Dutchmen, &c., a large proportion were unable to stand the French attacks. So soon as one of Napoleon's columns approached them, they became unsteady, and often went to the rear. Meanwhile there still stood in front of the duke's right wing, the second corps; and in front of his left wing, the first corps; and all that were left of Napoleon's "twelve thousand select cavalry" were riding about the British position, as if they were masters of it. This hour, then, or two hours, from five o'clock till seven, must have been a most anxious one for the British general and his troops. The commander of one brigade sent to the duke to beg for some relief or reinforcement; and the answer he received was,

"Tell him, that what he wishes is impossible. He, and I, and every man here, must fight till we die on the spot where we stand." Some one asked for a general instruction, as to what plan should be followed if the duke himself should fall. "My only plan," said the duke, "is, to stand my ground here to the last man." Long after the battle, he remarked, of this period of the day, "I looked oftener at my watch than at anything else. I knew that if my troops could keep their position till night, I must be joined by Blucher before morning; and we should not have left Bonaparte an army next day. But I was glad, as one hour of daylight slipped away after another, and our position was still maintained." It is scarcely possible for words to imply more distinctly, that the duke felt that he was standing his ground with an inferior force; relying on Blucher's aid, to enable him to strike a blow in return.

Meanwhile, as he was constantly calm, so he was ever hopeful and high-minded. An Italian officer in the French service, being taken prisoner, afterwards described the dismay he felt, on observing the quietness of the duke's demeanour, and the calmness of his countenance; which forced him to think that he must have some concealed reserve, of which the French generals knew nothing. His brief remarks, too, were always cheerful and reassuring. A young Piedmontese officer made himself useful, in carrying orders. "Were you ever in a battle before?" asked the duke. "No, my lord." "Then you are a lucky fellow, for you will never see such another!" was the rejoinder. At another time, encouraging the 95th regiment, expecting a charge of cavalry, he said, "Stand fast! 95th, we mustn't be beat; what would they say in England!" Shortly after,

when the French cavalry came on with threatening aspect, he said, "Never mind, we'll win this battle yet!" To a regiment exposed to a brisk cannonade, he remarked, "Hard pounding this! let's see who'll pound longest!" Often he was evidently the object of the enemy's aim, and a tree under which he sometimes took his stand, was repeatedly struck. "That's good practice," said the duke; "I think they fire better than in Spain." But, as we have said, he was ever high-minded; and when an officer of artillery came to the duke to tell him, that he had a clear view of Napoleon, and had several guns pointed in that direction, the duke exclaimed, "No! I'll not allow it. It is not the business of commanders to be firing upon one another!"

At half-past five, according to Count Drouet, the Prussians first came into collision with the sixth corps, which, with Domont's cavalry, had been placed on Napoleon's right wing, specially to give these new comers a warm reception. The contest soon became an earnest one on this side; Planchenoit, in the rear of Napoleon's right centre, was taken, and retaken, and he felt obliged to send some battalions of the Young Guard to strengthen Count Lobau. In this new struggle an hour or more passed, and seven o'clock, the last hour of the day drew on.

Here Gourgaud stops to claim a triumph. He says, "Sixty-five to sixty-eight thousand French troops *had beaten* one hundred and fifteen thousand English, Prussians, &c." But then he adds, "The emperor was of opinion that this was the moment for making a decisive attack, and *determining the fate of the day*." So that, although the English and Prussians are assumed to be beaten, the "fate of the day" remains "to be determined."

In fact, not one single step in retreat had the English army yet taken. About six o'clock, indeed, the farm-house of La Haye Sainte was abandoned by its English defenders, simply because their ammunition was expended, and without ammunition they could not defend the place. This was the one solitary advantage gained by the French in the whole day; and even this was not wrested by them from the English; the post was evacuated by the latter for the reason we have stated. And La Haye Sainte, it should be remembered, was about two hundred yards *in advance* of the British line. It was an outpost, and not a part of the main line. Its capture at an earlier period might have seriously endangered the duke's centre; but at this late hour Napoleon had but one card left to play, and in playing it the possession of La Haye Sainte did not greatly aid him.

Up to seven o'clock, then, this one poor outpost was the only foot of ground gained by the French, in compensation for what Ney calls "the most frightful carnage that I have ever witnessed." He is not here speaking of the defeat of the Imperial Guard, but of what preceded it. He had led, at one o'clock, the attack by D'Erlon's corps on the centre and left of the English position, and at three o'clock he had sent the heavy cavalry in among the British battalions. It is of these two attacks that Ney is speaking, and of the manner in which they were repulsed; and this veteran soldier, after witnessing Borodino, Leipsic, and twenty other fields of slaughter, describes the defeat of the first corps, and the destruction of the cavalry, as a "carnage" the like of which he had never before beheld.

"The emperor," says Gourgaud, "was now of opinion that the moment was come for making a decisive attack,

and determining the fate of the day." Yes, the moment was come; for, if the matter had been left as it stood, Napoleon's overthrow on the following morning would have been made certain. "I knew," said the duke, long after, "that if my troops could keep their position till night, I must be joined by Blucher before morning, and we should not have left Bonaparte an army next day." To keep the English and Prussian armies apart had been Napoleon's chief endeavour, but the sagacity and military talent of the two generals had defeated this purpose. The French army had only crossed the frontier on the 15th, and here, on the 18th, were the two allied armies already uniting on the same battle-field. When, therefore, Gourgaud tells us, in lofty and decorous language, that "the emperor was of opinion that this was the moment for making a decisive attack, and determining the fate of the day," the real meaning of these dignified phrases is, that Napoleon saw that one chance only remained to him, and that he must break the British line by the whole force of the Imperial Guard, or retire from the field a discomfited commander; to sustain in his turn an attack from the united armies the very next day. His strongest army-corps, the first and second, had both been cut up and crippled; his splendid cavalry were at that moment being "massacred" by the English grapeshot and musket-firing; and the only weapon of power that remained to him was this noble body of men, who had triumphed in fifty battles—his invincible phalanx, the Imperial Guard. At seven o'clock, therefore, or about that hour, he turned to this, his last resource, and ordered to the front this chosen and favourite arm, the right employment of which had given him so many victories.

SEVEN O'CLOCK.

It is not easy, amidst the various and contradictory accounts of the different French historians, to ascertain with exactness the real force employed in this attack. The Young Guard, under General Duhesme, had been partly employed in the defence of Planchenoit. The Old Guard, and the Middle Guard, had not up to this period of the battle drawn a trigger. Their strength is stated by Gourgaud to have been on this day four thousand four hundred and four thousand two hundred, or, united, eight thousand six hundred men.* This force far exceeded any strength which the duke could bring to bear upon any given point. In fact the two brigades of General Maitland and General Adam had to sustain this attack. The first, consisting of two battalions of Foot-guards, had marched forth two days before nineteen hundred and ninety-seven strong. On the evening of Waterloo it numbered only one thousand and twenty-seven; and doubtless, when this attack of the Imperial Guard came, it had not more than eleven hundred or eleven hundred and fifty bayonets. The other, General Adam's brigade, consisting of the 52nd, 71st, and 95th regiments, had been two thousand six hundred and twenty-one strong, but it was now reduced to about two thousand. Such was the force on either side which was now to engage in the last terrible encounter of this great contest.

But, while he was preparing for what he hoped would be the decisive blow, Napoleon sent orders to both his wings to prepare for a renewed attack, simultaneously,

* They are described, both in Count Drouet's speech and in "Book ix.," as "sixteen battalions." If the battalions consisted of six hundred men, this would give a total of nine thousand six hundred.

on Hougoumont and on the British left and centre. The chateau defended itself bravely and successfully, as it had done throughout the day. But the possession of La Haye Sainte gave the first corps of the French army great advantages, and the pressure on the British line at this point became fearfully severe. A German battalion was cut up by a charge of French cuirassiers: a body of Brunswick infantry, which the duke had moved up to strengthen the line, gave way, and retired about an hundred paces, and it required all the duke's personal exertions to bring them to re-form and stand their ground. The Prince of Orange had been wounded, and the Nassau troops under his command were with great difficulty induced to keep their ground. The British line had never been in so much danger of being broken as at this moment. But scarcely an hour of the day now remained, and the contest which was just taking place on the right centre was to be decisive of the fate of the day.

The grand attack of the Imperial Guard, to which Napoleon looked to decide the fate of his empire, was now beginning. Captain Siborne states the two columns of attack to have consisted of ten battalions, besides two battalions left as a reserve. If these battalions consisted of six hundred men each, they would amount to six thousand; but if of seven hundred and twenty men each, they would amount, on the whole, to seven thousand two hundred men, and these were unquestionably the first soldiers in France.

These columns were formed in front of La Belle Alliance, and began their advance with that kind of mismanagement which had marked many of the movements of the French leaders throughout the day: they

did not advance simultaneously, but the first column preceded the second, although the two took different courses. Neither did they assail that part of the duke's line which was the weakest, but threw themselves upon two brigades of the British infantry.

Of the two columns,—one of which skirted the enclosures of Hougoumont, and aimed at the right of the British line, while the other made its onset nearer to the centre,—the latter gained the precedence. As it descended into the valley, and allowed the French artillery on the heights behind an opportunity for action, the whole of these guns opened fire with a rapidity and weight which had not been experienced before throughout the day. Wherever a regiment was visible in the British line, there the round-shot and howitzer shells rained death upon it. But by degrees the attacking columns passed through the hollow ground, and began to ascend the opposite heights. Now they became visible to the British artillery, and the cannon-shot plunged into their masses with tremendous effect. The horse of Marshal Ney was killed; General Friant was wounded, and General Michel was killed. On the fall of the latter, a battalion of grenadiers came to a halt; but another general succeded in inspiring it with new courage. The column moved forward, sorely shaken by its losses; but at last it crowned the height, and to its astonishment saw nothing before it but a small battery of field-pieces, and a few mounted officers in the rear. But one of these was the duke, and the next moment the word of command was heard, "Up, Guards, and at them!" The British Guards, who had been ordered to lie down, sprang to their feet, in a compact line of four deep, and in a few seconds, a volley was heard, and then another, and a

third; and in the first minute three hundred of the attacking column fell. The French officers rushed to the front, and called upon the men to deploy into line. Lord Saltoun exclaimed to the English Guards, "Now's your time, my boys!"—and the duke exclaimed, "Charge!" The brigade sprang forward, with a cheer, to the charge. All was disorder in the French ranks. Many flung down their arms and knapsacks and dispersed; the mass, in dire confusion, rushed down the slope, with the English Guards in full pursuit.

But the English were instantly called back, for now appeared in sight the second column, which, shrinking from the fire of the batteries which had so crushed the first, diverged to the right, and by this mistaken move, presented its flank to General Adam's brigade. The brigade of Guards was formed in its front, while the 52nd and 71st regiments were on its flank. The three regiments poured such a fire into the mass, that it melted like snow in the sunshine. Soon was repeated the order, "Charge!" and the two brigades assailing the devoted column at once in its front and on its flank, swept it from the field. In a few moments the hollow ground was crowded with fugitives; Napoleon's last stake was lost; the battle of Waterloo was, practically, ended.

Of this terrible conflict, Lamartine rapidly sketches the progress, in a few glowing lines,—a summary of various French narratives:—

"These six thousand grenadiers advanced with shouldered arms, amidst cries of 'Vive l'Empereur!' Wellington awaited them with forty pieces of cannon, with the matches lighted. As they ascended and approached, the battery fired a volley point-blank into the advancing mass, which, as the smoke arose, was seen to

waver for a moment; then to close up and advance as compact as ever. On a second discharge the same oscillation took place, the same closing up. On the third discharge the English saw the column reduced to a block of men, decimated by grape-shot:—two of the battalions had been struck down, the other two hesitated, and recoiled to seek another means of access to these impregnable heights. Napoleon turned pale, and at length doubted of victory."

This may be said to be the language of a florid writer, depicting the event long after its occurrence. But Count Drouet, who witnessed the whole scene, thus described it in the Chamber of Peers, just six days after the battle:—

"The (first) four battalions of the Guard, when they arrived on the plateau, were received by the most terrible fire of musquetry and grape. The *great number of wounded men* who separate from the column, cause it to be believed that the Guard is routed. A panic terror communicates itself to the neighbouring (or second) column, which precipitately takes flight."

Count Drouet, witnessing the repulse of both the columns, from the height behind, might suppose that the dispersal of the second arose from panic; but in so thinking, he did injustice to his countrymen. The second column came into action as gallantly as the first; but, although it was the stronger of the two, it had to contend with two English brigades instead of one; and its chance of success was therefore proportionally smaller. Clearly, it was bad generalship to send the two columns, one after the other, to be beaten separately. Had they reached the British position at the same moment, they would have brought against the two

British brigades a force outnumbering them by two to one. Gourgaud thus describes the fate of this second column: "The eight battalions of the Guard which were in the centre, after having withstood for a long time all the attacks of the enemy, and contended for every foot of ground, were at last completely disorganized by the mass of fugitives, and overwhelmed by the numbers of the enemy."

With the failure of this, his last attack, Napoleon's hopes, and his empire, ended. His fall, when it came at last, proved a crash which left nothing more for destruction to do. At the moment when the Imperial Guards were sent back in confusion, the Prussians under Marshal Blucher had come into action. His cavalry had supported the English left, and two brigades of English cavalry, which guarded the extreme left of the duke's position, had been released from this duty, and had moved to the support of the British centre. And now, the Prussian infantry of the first corps, commanded by General Zieten, rushed upon the villages of La Haye and Smohain, and instantly carried them at the bayonet's point. A third column renewed the attack on Planchenoit, which was almost in the centre of the French position. The moment was come for a general advance, and the duke, with that wonderful perception which distinguished his whole career, instantly seized it. He himself describes this critical moment, in the account written the very next day. He says:—

"Having observed that the troops (Imperial Guard) retired from this attack in great confusion, and that the march of the Prussians on Planchenoit had begun to take effect," "I determined to attack the enemy, and immediately advanced the whole line of infantry, supported by the cavalry and artillery."

An eye-witness thus described the scene at the time, "The duke, who had been attentively observing what was passing in the French and Prussian armies, suddenly shut up his telescope, and exclaimed to the officers near him, 'Now every man must advance!'"

Long had this order been eagerly expected. The British troops had stood for more than eight hours under a terrible fire. They had seen more than one-fourth of their numbers struck down by cannon-shot, and they longed for one final struggle, which should end the whole contest. The order flew to the right and to the left, and loud were the shouts with which it was received. Everywhere the lines of infantry were formed, the cavalry mounted and rode on, and a scene of triumph and exultation commenced, of which none who witnessed it could ever lose the memory.

We have observed, a few sentences back, that only half an hour before, two brigades of light cavalry, Vivian's and Vandeleur's, had been moved from the extreme left of the English line, and brought nearer to the centre. These six regiments, numbering about two thousand sabres, were now of the greatest possible service, in driving before them the broken and scattered French. They charged and dispersed various bodies of cavalry which attempted to form and make a stand, and continued pressing upon the fugitives of the infantry till the whole mass of Napoleon's army melted into a chaotic crowd. And now were seen, on all sides, "unfurled colours raised aloft, bands striking up, the soldiers cheering tumultuously, as, with one simultaneous movement, they quitted the height on which they had so long stood, and descended joyfully into the plain, over which the French, on all sides, were now retreating in disorder."

Their great commander himself was naturally among the foremost in this magnificent advance. Napier says, "The duke, who was stationed on the left of the guns and the right of the Guards, gave the order to advance, and like lightning rode to the rear, and brought up the light cavalry, cheering them on, with his hat off—his cheers most cordially echoed by my brave fellows and myself." He rode in front of Adam's brigade, cheering it forward, speaking joyously to the men, and receiving their hearty shouts of congratulation. At last one of his staff ventured to hint to him that they were getting into the enemy's lines, and that his life ought not to be thrown away. "Never mind," was the reply, "the battle's won, and my life is of no consequence now."

Down the slope of their own heights, across the valley, up the face of the enemy's hill, marched the British line triumphantly. Here and there a remnant of a French battalion or squadron offered a brief resistance; but the cry of "*Sauve qui peut!*" had been heard, and the French knew that the battle was lost, and that the Prussians were already in their rear. Hence Fleury de Chaboulon, Napoleon's own secretary, thus describes the close:—

"Wellington did not allow our grenadiers time to recollect themselves. He caused them to be attacked in flank by his cavalry, and compelled them to retire in the greatest disorder. At the same moment the Prussians carried the village of La Haye; and our cavalry, our infantry, already staggered by the defeat of the Guard, were afraid of being cut off, and precipitately retreated. The other troops of the right, seeing some of our squadrons pell-mell, and some of the Guards

running away, thought all was lost, and quitted their position. This contagious movement was communicated in an instant to the left, and the whole army abandoned its strongest posts as eagerly as they had previously assailed them. Soon the whole army was nothing but a confused crowd, which the English and Prussians routed without effort, and massacred without pity."*

"Napoleon," says Lamartine, "saw that army which a few hours before was his only hope, now returning in broken fragments, and exclaimed, 'All is lost!' For a moment he contemplated the disastrous scene, turned pale, stammered, and shed some tears, the first he had ever shed upon a field of battle."

On marched the English, seizing at every step the artillery which had so long poured its iron hail upon them, and driving before them the crowds of dismayed and disordered French. Up the heights on which Napoleon and his army had stood, they now exultingly pressed, and here the two generals met, with mutual congratulations. Marshal Blucher had well performed his part, though the state of the roads had hindered his arrival until the very close of the battle. In less than an hour he had driven in the whole right wing of the French army, and now reached the very centre of Napoleon's position, at the same moment when the duke had penetrated to the same point with his attack in front. After a few moments of hearty rejoicing, the English commander gladly resigned to the Prussian, the remaining duty of a vigorous pursuit. The British troops, after a long day's work, were physically unable to chase their enemies far. The Prussian general, therefore, to quote their own accounts, "assembled his

* Vol. ii. p. 192.

officers, and gave orders to send the last horse and the last man in pursuit of the enemy."

Well and earnestly was this duty performed. All night long were the wretched French pursued. Nine times did they attempt to halt for rest, and nine times was the Prussian drum heard, and the flight was again to be resumed. A French officer* thus describes the scene—

"Near one of the hedges of Hougoumont, without even a drummer to beat the rappel, we succeeded in rallying three hundred men; these were nearly all that remained of our splendid division. Thither came also a band of generals. Here was Reille,† D'Erlon, Bachelor, Foy, and others. All were gloomy and sorrowful. They said, one to the other, 'Here is all that is left of my corps,—of my division,—of my brigade!—I myself!'

"The enemy's horse approached, and we were obliged to retreat. The movements of the English cavalry had demoralized our soldiers, who, seeing all regular retreat cut off, strove each man to save himself. Infantry, cavalry, artillery, all jammed together, were pressing along pell-mell. Figure to yourself forty thousand men all struggling along a single causeway. We could not take that way, so we struck across the fields. We were humiliated, we were hopeless; we walked like a troop of mourners.

"We passed through Thuin, and finding a little

* Colonel Lemonnier De Lafosse: Memoirs, p. 385.

† Reille had commanded the second corps, D'Erlon the first—each of which had consisted of about twenty thousand men! Can there be a more striking proof of the utter dissolution of the French army, than this fact, narrated by a French officer?

copse, we gladly sought its shelter. While our horses grazed, we lay down and slept. We rested in the little copse till noon, and sat watching the wrecks of our army defile along the road. It was a soul-harrowing sight!

"We drew near to Beaumont, when suddenly a regiment of horse was seen debouching from a wood on our left. The column that we followed cried out, 'The Prussians! the Prussians!' and hurried off in utter disorder.

"I was trying to return to General Foy, when another horde of fugitives burst into Beaumont, swept me into the current of their flight, and hurried me out of the town with them. I reached Landrecy, though I know not how or when."

Such is the description given by one of the fugitives, and it exactly corresponds with the official report of the Prussian general, Gneisenau, who says, "The French army, pursued without intermission, was absolutely disorganized. The highway presented the appearance of an immense shipwreck; it was covered with an innumerable quantity of cannon, caissons, baggage, arms, and goods of every kind. As soon as the enemy heard the sound of our drums, they fled, while the moonlight favoured the pursuit, for the whole march was a continued chase, whether in the corn-fields or in the houses."

"At three o'clock Napoleon had despatched a courier to Paris with the news that victory was certain: a few hours afterwards he had no longer an army."

The French accounts, Gourgaud's, Napoleon's, &c., written long after, endeavour to diminish the defeat by representing that within a week as many as sixty or sixty-five thousand men were reassembled at Laon. Some one attempted to make a representation of this sort in

the French Chamber of Peers, on the 24th of June; when Marshal Ney rose in his place, and declared all such accounts to be deceptive. "It is a mere illusion to suppose that sixty thousand men can be collected. Marshal Grouchy," said he, "cannot have more than twenty thousand, or twenty-five thousand at the most."

Fortunately, however, the question is set at rest by Fleury de Chaboulon, Napoleon's secretary, who describes very vividly what followed immediately after the battle. He tells us, how, in his flight, on meeting Maret, "the emperor could not repress his emotion; a large tear, escaping from his eyes, betrayed the efforts of his soul." Again he says, "The emperor stopped beyond Rocroi to take some refreshment. We were all in a pitiable state: our eyes swelled with tears, our countenances haggard, our clothes covered with dust or blood." And, on arriving at Paris, when one of his ministers spoke of the army, Napoleon exclaimed, "*I have no longer an army!* I have nothing but fugitives!"*

It was this absolute destruction of the French army which made Waterloo one of the greatest and most important of all victories. Thus, Jules Maurel, a French historian, says—

"From a comparison of all the documents, it appears, that Bonaparte was already beaten when the mass of the Prussian army appeared on the field; but the arrival of Bulow had powerfully assisted the British, and the arrival of Blucher changed the defeat into *an unparalleled disaster*."

Lamartine, another Frenchman, adds,—

"This defeat left nothing undecided,—nothing for

* Fleury de Chaboulon, vol. ii. pp. 203, 206, 218.

the future to do. Victory had given judgment: the war began and ended in a single battle."

But let us return for a moment to the great victor of the day. At a road-side house, near Rossomme, he left Blucher, who gladly undertook the pursuit, and after twelve hours of constant exertion, he turned his charger's head once more towards Mont St. Jean and Waterloo. Darkness now shrouded a thousand scenes of horror, over which it had been useless to pause. At his quarters the duke found assembled the survivors of his staff, the representatives of the allied powers, and a few other friends. All sorely needed rest and food, and the meal was ready. On leaving his quarters in the morning, he had desired his domestics to have dinner ready to place on the table "whenever it might be wanted," and his cook excited amusement by the confidence with which he asserted, that "his master had ordered dinner, and would certainly return to eat it." But the thoughts which would throng into the conqueror's mind, at that moment, must have been such as few men have ever experienced.

The foremost considerations with the Duke of Wellington always were, *his country, and his duty*. But besides these there was a personal question, little spoken of by him, but which could not be excluded from his thoughts.

"I go to measure myself with Wellington," exclaimed Napoleon, when he flung himself into his carriage, only a few days before, to join his army on the Belgian frontier. The duke spoke not of such matters, but he could not possibly forget, that the muse of history was waiting all that day, to know *which* of the two great names was to take the highest place among the many able

commanders of the nineteenth century. The one had defeated, in turn, nearly every general in Europe, except Wellington. The other had triumphed over almost all the Marshals of France, but had not yet confronted Napoleon.

Captain Moyle Sherer thus writes:—

"Upon the night of that memorable battle, the words and emotions of the conqueror will long be remembered by those who sat with him at supper, after the anxious and awful day had closed. The fountain of a great heart lies deep, and the self-government of a calm mind permits no tears. But, this night, Wellington repeatedly leaned back in his chair, and rubbing his hands convulsively, exclaimed, 'Thank God! I have met him: Thank God! I have met him.'* And, ever as he spoke, the smile that lighted up his eye was dimmed by those few tears that gush warm from a grateful heart.

"His many and deep anxieties; his noble desire to defeat his country's implacable enemy; his rational doubts of success against so great a general;—these and many other fears and hopes, undisclosed to any one,—all were now resolved and dissipated by a result more sudden, full, and glorious than any expectation he could have formed, or any hope he could have admitted. England was placed on the very pinnacle of glory; her foe was prostrate, his legions fugitives, and her general might joyfully look around and say, 'This work was mine!'"

* The modesty,—the singular abstinence from a boast or a vaunt,—which is perceptible in this exclamation, is wonderfully characteristic of the man. The same quietness of manner distinguished him through life; and it contrasts strongly with the constant strut and proud assumption of Napoleon.

But after necessary food, and the writing of despatches and letters, came such rest as the excited mind and body could take. The duke threw himself, unwashed but exhausted, on his bed long after midnight. He had desired Dr. Hume to bring him the report of the surgeons at seven in the morning. The doctor was punctual, but the claims of nature were not satisfied, the duke's sleep was still sound. Knowing that, with him, duty was paramount to all other considerations, the doctor at once awakened him. The list was produced, and the doctor began to read; but as name after name came forth—this one as dying, that as dead—the voice failed, and Hume, looking up, perceived the tears rapidly chasing each other down the victor's blackened cheeks;—he laid down the list and instantly left the apartment.

The British loss was indeed great. Of the duke's staff twelve were killed and forty-six wounded. The number of British officers killed and wounded in these three days exceeded seven hundred, and of privates it was more than ten thousand, so that about every third man in the British ranks had been struck down in this terrible battle. The loss of the Dutch, Hanoverians, &c., had been seven thousand; and that of the Prussians exceeded six thousand. As to the French, their loss in killed and wounded never could be ascertained; but it is certain that of one hundred and fifty thousand men who crossed the frontiers, not fifty thousand were ever re-assembled under their colours.

The utter loss of his army sent Napoleon back to Paris. But the news of his total defeat arrived along with him. His fame, his "glory," and his power perished together. The Chambers rose in rebellion

against him; and his abdication was demanded. The English and Prussian armies, meanwhile, rapidly advanced; and on their arrival before Paris the city capitulated; the king returned to his palace; and Napoleon gave himself up to the captain of an English ship of war. On the 15th of June one of the finest armies that he had ever led into the field entered Belgium, to take advantage of the Duke of Wellington's unprepared state;—on the 3rd of July, just fifteen days after, *Paris itself capitulated!* Such were the vast results of Waterloo.

Napoleon, indeed, had been in some peril, for the Prussian general showed a particular anxietyto get hold of him, in order that he might hang him! The duke had no fondness for him,—always designating him in his despatches, merely as "Bonaparte;" but the old Prussian field-marshal, remembering the cruel treatment of his country by the French in 1807, felt, and constantly expressed, sentiments of positive hatred. The duke, however, with that loftiness of aim and of feeling which had forbidden his officers to fire upon Napoleon during the action, firmly resisted Blucher's desires on this point. General Muffling, the Prussian commissioner, tells us, that the duke said to him, "I wish my friend and colleague to see this matter in the light I do: such an act would give our names to history stained with a crime; and posterity would say of us, 'They were not worthy to be his conquerors;'—the more so, as such a deed would be useless, and can have no object."

In the same tone the duke wrote to Sir Charles Stuart, telling him, "I said, that as a private friend, I advised him to have nothing to do with so foul a transaction; that he and I had acted too distinguished parts in these

transactions to become executioners; and that I was determined that if the Sovereigns chose to put him to death, they should appoint an executioner, *which should not be me.*"

In a similar spirit, the duke succeeded in preventing the Prussians from executing other plans of vengeance, such as the blowing up the bridge of Jena, pulling down the column of Austerlitz, and the like. In fact, had the old marshal been alone in these transactions, he would gladly have indulged his troops with the plunder of Paris.

Indeed, such an utter overthrow as France had received, and that in the course of a few days, was hardly to be paralleled in history. Sufficient stress has seldom been laid upon that wonderful working of the divine Providence by which this great contest, expected by all men to be so long, so desperate, and so sanguinary, was suddenly brought to a close on the fourth day after its commencement. All the great powers of Europe had agreed upon a united effort. They had pledged their faith to one another to place six hundred thousand men on the soil of France in July, 1815. All at once, in the middle of June, while the bulk of these armies were moving up from Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, and other distant lands, they hear that the war is begun. And in four days after, they hear that it is *finished!* Such is not the ordinary course of human history.

All, however, is easily accounted for. Napoleon saw in England the most resolute, consistent, and indomitable of his foes, and in England's great general, the only captain whom he could hold in no light esteem. He said, and not unwisely, "If the Anglo-Belgian army had been destroyed at Waterloo, what service could the

allies derive from the number of armies which were preparing to cross the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees?"*

And acting upon this sound view of the case, and knowing that one or two more weeks would elapse before Wellington could have his veteran battalions around him, he resolved to throw himself like an avalanche upon the duke's army in its unreadiness; in the hope that a campaign beginning with a defeat of this his chief opponent would alarm England, terrify the other powers, and so make peace, with his continued retention of the throne of France, attainable.

This plan was a sagacious as well as a bold one. It grappled at once with the grand difficulty of the case. But the difficulty, when grappled with, overmastered him. Still, the peculiar characteristics of this momentous struggle deserves to be carefully remarked. A judicious writer has well observed, that—

"Waterloo seemed to bear the features of a grand, immediate interposition of Providence. Had human judgments been consulted, they would have drawn a different plan. The Prussians would have joined the English and have swept the enemy before them; or, the British would have been in force enough to have beaten the French long before the set of sun, &c., &c. But if the French had suffered a common defeat, with consummate generals at their head they would have rallied; or, retiring in force, would have called in all available aids, and have renewed the struggle. So the conflict held on till the last moment, when they could neither escape nor conquer. If they had retreated an hour before nightfall they might have been saved; if they could have

* Hist. Memoir, book ix. p. 203.

fought an hour after it, darkness would have covered them. But the crash came on the very edge of darkness. The Prussians came up unfatigued by battle and fresh for pursuit. The night was to be a night of slaughter. 'Thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon.'"

Such was one of the grand events of modern history,—the victory which gave all Europe peace for forty years. Ascribing, as we most unreservedly do, the whole ordering of this momentous struggle to an overruling Providence, it still seems a duty to add a few words on the respective merits, or demerits, connected with this tremendous contest, of the two great commanders, who for the first and last time met at Waterloo. Let us first glance at the great deeds achieved, and the great mistakes committed, by Napoleon in the course of these three eventful days.

He carried his magnificent army over the frontier, and threw it upon the allied armies in a manner exhibiting the most consummate skill. Twenty years spent in the practice of war had given him an expertness in the handling of large bodies of troops which few generals have ever possessed. He showed also on the 16th that he was a better general than Blucher, and that his army was a better army than that of the Prussians. But here our commendation must close; for a variety of faults and errors have been pointed out by military critics, of which we shall only mention a few of the chief. Napoleon was guilty of two great miscalculations, and of three important practical mistakes: These were:—

1. He rashly and erroneously assumed that his appearance in Belgium at the head of a fine army would force his opponents, Wellington and Blucher, out of mere awe

and terror, to fall back, to evacuate the country, and so to give him a triumph at the opening of the campaign. In his IXth Book he seriously argues that they *ought* to have done so: but this was a strange miscalculation. When had either Wellington or Blucher showed any alacrity in running away? And what right had he to assume that a force amounting, when united, to nearly two hundred thousand men, would act as if terror-stricken, on the mere appearance of a French army of only one hundred and fifty thousand? Yet he constantly tells us that they ought to have retreated, and that his calculations always rested on the presumption that they certainly would retreat.

2. In like manner was he disappointed when he sent Grouchy with thirty-five or forty thousand men, to occupy and keep employed the whole Prussian army. Again did he absurdly overlook the real character of Blucher, who was not one to be easily duped. Napoleon might speculate, if he pleased, on the chance of keeping Blucher at Wavre while he was overpowering and crushing Wellington at Waterloo; but Blucher was equally at liberty to despise all such devices, and to leave Napoleon's lieutenant in order to seek for Napoleon himself. This was what actually took place, and hence we see that again Napoleon is exposed to the imputation of having fatally miscalculated.

3. But as in his plans there were these two errors, so in actual execution we meet with three egregious faults. Having found Wellington with his weak army apart from Blucher, why did he allow several hours to elapse before he seized the opportunity for which he had been hoping? He speaks of the softened state of the ground after several hours' rain. But, as we have seen, when

Grouchy advances the same excuse for inaction at Wavre, he styles it "ridiculous!" and who can say that the movements which he actually made at eleven o'clock, *could not* have been made at ten, or even at nine o'clock? Meanwhile, although Napoleon was *waiting*, the Prussians were *marching*. They found the task *difficult*, while he deemed it *impossible*. In earlier days he would have replied that "there was no such word in his vocabulary."

4. Again, to what strange hallucination was it owing, that, all through the day, attacks which might have been made simultaneously were only discharged in succession? Thus, at three or four o'clock, he sorely tried the nerve and pluck of the English infantry by pouring in upon them "twelve thousand select horse." It took them three hours to kill or drive away these formidable intruders. And *then*, when the French cavalry had been destroyed, Napoleon next attacked the English line with six or eight thousand of his Imperial Guard. But what prevented his moving this formidable column up the heights of Mont St. Jean, while the cuirassiers were already in possession of the plateau? They had seized or silenced the English artillery; they had compelled the infantry to throw themselves into squares. If a mass of the finest infantry in France had then been thrown upon the British centre, how fearful would have been the trial? But Napoleon still delayed. He sent on his cavalry, unsupported by any infantry; and then, when the cavalry had been "massacred," he sent on a column of infantry, unsupported by any cavalry. Will the greatest admirer of his genius hesitate to admit that his practical generalship, his excellence as a leader in battle, was not conspicuous at Waterloo? Yet, wherefore was he less vigorous, less audacious at Waterloo,

than at Austerlitz or Jena? He was still in the very prime of life. Must we suppose that the toils and troubles and disappointments of 1812—1814 had prematurely worn out his mind; and that he was already, at only forty-six years of age, mentally decrepit?

5. The most singular exhibition of defect in generalship, however, and of blindness to that defect, is seen in this,—that he could not lose a battle without utterly losing his army also!

The general who can bear a defeat well, and can carry off his army with only a moderate loss, is entitled to take a high rank amongst commanders. He who cannot do this is only a fair-weather general.

The Prussian commander was attacked on the 16th before his army was all assembled. He placed his men badly,—so badly that Wellington predicted their certain defeat. Yet, when that defeat fell upon him, he rallied his army at a distance of a quarter of a league, and was ready and eager to fight another battle on the second day after. It was this unconquerability which made Blucher one of the most formidable antagonists of his time.

But let us turn to Napoleon. He invites us to do this, by the pertinacity with which he assails Wellington on this very point. Again and again he brings the charge vehemently against him, that at Waterloo he had made no provision for a retreat. Thus, in Book ix., p. 124, he says—

"He had in his rear the defiles of the forest of Soignes, so that, if beaten, retreat was impossible."

And again, at p. 158—

"The enemy must have seen with affright how many difficulties the field of battle he had chosen was about to throw in the way of his retreat."

And again, at p. 207—

"The position of Mont St. Jean was ill-chosen. The first requisite of a field of battle, is, to have no defiles in its rear." "The injudicious choice of his field of battle, rendered all retreat impossible."

Thus Napoleon challenges our criticism on this very point. All military authorities are agreed that he was wrong in his censure on Wellington. It is conceded even by Frenchmen like Lamartine, that the forest of Soignes, instead of being a source of peril, was an element of safety. But he who assails his rival on this especial point, of a provision for retreat, must expect to be asked, himself, "How his own retreat was conducted?"

There is no parallel to its disastrous character. An army of nearly ninety thousand fine soldiers, not forty thousand of which could have been killed or wounded, was nothing the next day but a vast horde of fugitives. We notice, with contemptuous pity, how the Spanish generals, in 1809, managed to incur such a disgraceful defeat at Ocana, that out of fifty thousand men, not one thousand kept the field a week after. But here was one of the finest armies that ever France sent forth, commanded, too, by the conqueror of Europe; and even the very day after the battle, not a single thousand men were to be found in the field! All were utterly scattered and broken up. And yet their general has the assurance, in criticizing the general who has beaten him, to censure him, especially, because "he had taken no precautions to secure his retreat!"

But now of his great rival and conqueror:—The Duke of Wellington had not the same opportunity for displaying his skill and talent in 1815, which he had enjoyed

in 1813. His purposed campaign was to open on the 1st of July, and it had been the favourite object of Napoleon to take the initiative, to open the campaign before the British troops from America had arrived, and thus to lead the campaign himself without waiting for the duke to open it. Hence, during these three days, Napoleon was always advancing, attacking, while Wellington with his weak army was making the best defence he could. And, accordingly, at Waterloo, the duke, knowing the disparity of his force, could only hope to "keep his ground" till the Prussians should arrive. He was in the position of a small man attacked by a giant. He could only parry his blows and allow the assailant to exhaust his strength, in the hope that, at last, by a well-aimed thrust he might lay his enemy prostrate. For nine long hours, therefore, the duke's whole business was to meet and repel the powerful attacks of Napoleon; and he had to do this with, according to Napoleon's own admission, "less than forty thousand good troops." In fact, his infantry, British and of the German Legion, were only eighteen thousand four hundred and eighty-five, his British and German Legion cavalry seven thousand eight hundred and thirty-four, while Napoleon had very nearly seventy thousand excellent infantry, and more than eighteen thousand splendid cavalry. Yet for all these nine hours did the duke meet and repel all his assaults. This sort of soldiership is less showy than daring manœuvres, but it is equally valuable, and in the present instance, when the materials the duke had to work with are considered, the merit of it is not at all inferior. One of the best generals commanding under the duke, when acknowledging the thanks of the House of Commons, said, "An

army hastily drawn together, composed of the troops of various nations, and amongst which were counted several brigades of inexperienced militia, was the force which the duke had to oppose to one of the most formidable and best-appointed armies that France ever produced. No other man living could have rendered the service which he performed, with an army so composed."

The chief point, however, in the character of a great general is the possession of that "eagle eye" which enables him, amid all the din and turmoil of a terrible contest, to perceive exactly the right moment for vigorous action, and the right place at which to aim an attack. It was this, especially, which gave the duke his first signal victory over the French at Salamanca; and it was this which turned the repulse of the French at Waterloo into a disastrous defeat.

Narrative-writers, collecting, long after, the best available testimony from all quarters, and carefully comparing and sifting the whole, are able to arrive at probable conclusions as to the order and date of the leading events. But this sort of calm investigation is wholly different from the horrible din, the ceaseless clamour, and the almost impervious smoke which obscures everything on the battle-field. We, for instance, comparing the accounts of the French, the Prussians, and the Austrians, are able to arrive at the conclusion, with absolute certainty that General Bulow's corps first showed itself on the right of the French line about half-past four, and began to take part in the engagement about half-past five. But it is quite certain that the duke, fully occupied just then with the French cavalry, who were riding round his squares, knew nothing of the actual arrival of the long-expected succour until long

4:30
7:30

after. It was nearly two hours after this, when, by carefully examining every part of the left of his line, the duke was able to perceive the rising of smoke over Planchenoit. This was not until seven o'clock; but it assured him of this, that some part of the promised Prussian support had arrived, and that more must be coming up. And this was sufficient to give him new hopes of ultimate success, though he could be certain, as yet, of very little more than that some aid was at hand.

It was shortly after this, and about the time of the movement of the Imperial Guard, when news reached him from Marshal Blucher himself that he was then actually joining the extreme left of the British line. It was this support which enabled the British light cavalry to move from the left of the line, and to take a position nearer the centre. And hence, when the English and the French Guards had tried each other's mettle, and the latter had retired in disorder, the duke saw at one comprehensive glance the arrival of that moment for which he had been longing,—the defeat and confusion of Napoleon's last reserve; the presence of the long-promised Prussian succours, at that last moment of daylight which just allowed time for one daring movement and no more. And the decision and boldness with which the duke seized this golden opportunity are among the finest traits in the whole history of great military deeds. A brief hesitation, if only of a quarter of an hour, would have allowed the French, although beaten, to retire at leisure. A renewal of the contest might have followed after the lapse of a couple of days, but how different would have been the whole history of such a campaign from that of Waterloo! It was this

clear perception of the right moment for an attack, and the fearlessness with which fewer than thirty thousand men were led forward to assault at least twice their numbers, commanded by Napoleon, Soult, and Ney,—it was this wonderful union of prudence, decision, and the highest kind of valour, which made the Duke of Wellington the first of all the generals of his day.

And, united with these lofty endowments, there was the patient, enduring, untiring discharge of every duty of a commander. In this, as in every other of his battles, the duke was constantly wherever his presence was needed. There could not be a pressure felt at any portion of the line,—there could not be an anxious moment when even the bravest might look around him and begin to think of the possibility of an overthrow, but presently the well-known chestnut-horse would be seen, and the whisper would run through the ranks, "Here's the Duke! stand fast!" This might seem to some to be merely a matter of course; but it is the being always in the right place at the right time; it is the union of the commonest duties with the highest which fills up the outline of a great character, and leaves to posterity not only a brilliant name, but a really bright example.

CONCLUSION:

ADDRESSED ESPECIALLY

TO THE BRITISH RIFLE VOLUNTEERS.

In passing in review those prominent facts in British history which we have attempted to describe, two or three circumstances seem to exhibit themselves in strong relief, as more particularly deserving notice.

The first of these is, the reproduction of ancient times, in the movement lately seen throughout Great Britain. We are transported, in idea, back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, by the recent establishment of a native volunteer and unpaid army. More modern habits, indeed, had almost extinguished the usages of the olden time, and had substituted a regular army for the unbought services of the yeomen of England. But this change is scarcely yet two centuries old; the victories of Falkirk, Crecy, and Agincourt, were not the triumphs of soldiers by profession. In those days the sovereign proclaimed a need,—a danger, and the young men of both town and country at once took down their bows and quivers; and eagerly gathered around his banner. And, as the principle was the same, so did the arms of that time resemble, in a chief feature, those of our own day. The strength of England, in Plantagenet times, lay in her *marksmen;* in those youths whose

pastime it was, in times of peace, to acquire a skill in the use of arms, which made them truly formidable in war. All through the splendid reigns of those great kings, the archers of England were famed throughout Europe. Victory after victory was decided wholly by their resistless skill. Alike from the towns and from the hamlets of Britain came forth those unbought, self-trained marksmen, before whom no troops in the world could stand. For two centuries this "cheap defence of nations" has been lost, or has lain dormant, in England; but at last it has again aroused itself, and has come forth. And to what end? Simply to provide, that *in case of need*, our records of the nineteenth century may resemble those of the thirteenth;—in short, may repeat a pithy remark which is found in the *Chronicle of London*, now in the British Museum, under the date of 1294:—

"This yeare the Normaunds came to Doborre, and brent a gret part of the tobun: but they were sclayn every moder's son: ther eschapid none."

Like the British archers of the olden time, too, our modern volunteers are essentially a *defensive* force. The great English armies of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were usually armies raised for the purpose of repelling invasion. When eighty thousand foot-soldiers, and seven thousand horse, assembled at York in the summer of 1298, it was for the purpose of avenging the Scottish ravage of the northern counties. Invasion, in those days, came usually from the north; and again and again were the archers of England summoned either to repel, or to avenge, a Scottish invasion. But, for foreign warfare,—for an attack upon France, for instance, the force which gathered under the English standards was

generally far smaller. The chief feature of the splendid victories of Crecy, Poictiers, and Agincourt, consisted in the insignificant numbers of the English armies. And we have seen a repetition of this feature in modern times. The British force by which the Duke of Wellington wrought out the emancipation of Spain and Portugal, was quite insignificant in amount. It seldom exceeded thirty thousand men; while the invading armies of the French generally amounted, in the aggregate, to more than three hundred thousand. But at that same moment, as now, if an invading army had succeeded in establishing itself on British soil, it would not have been a force of thirty thousand, but of more than three hundred thousand, that it would have had to encounter.

A second feature which demands notice is, that, throughout these combats, we always find abundant proof that a firm, *immoveable infantry*, constitutes the back-bone of every army. Its cavalry may be its right arm; but the substance, the body of its power, must be found in a sufficient line of men, who, standing upon their own feet, must be killed or at least struck down, before they can be got out of the way. This it was, as Napoleon himself admits, which frustrated all his calculations at Waterloo. He had never come into contact with the English infantry, and consequently had no accurate idea of what he afterwards termed, their "obstinacy." In the earlier part of the day, the duke having, with his usual prudence, kept his forces as much as possible out of the sight of the French artillery, Napoleon expressed his surprise and vexation at not being able to reconnoitre them, when General Foy, who had seen much of the duke and

of his troops in the Peninsula, remarked, "Wellington never shows his forces till they are wanted; but if they be there, I warn your majesty *que l'infanterie Anglaise en dual est le diable.*" And, at a later period, while admiring the firmness of the English infantry, Napoleon added, "But they must run soon." And when Soult expressed a doubt, he turned upon him with the question, "Why not?" and the old marshal, who had often seen them in the Pyrenees, was obliged to reply, "Because they will be cut to pieces first!"

A third circumstance which may reasonably give rise to much and serious cogitation,—is, the prodigious advance which has latterly been made in the construction of more formidable weapons than our forefathers ever knew. For more than two centuries past, the common musket has been the weapon of the British infantry,—a weapon which was scarcely dangerous to an enemy at a greater distance than about an hundred yards. Yet, even with this ill-constructed gun, the British Guards at Waterloo so disordered the attacking columns of the famed Imperial Guard, as to leave little for the bayonet to do. But, could this scene be repeated, with the difference of the rifles now in use, it seems tolerably clear that the assailants could not even have approached the English position. Equally difficult must it be, to effect a landing on any part of a coast, whereon a few thousand riflemen could previously have been collected. This new feature in war seems to counterbalance the advantage given to an assailant by the invention of steam-boats. It has been said, that the application of steam to the purposes of a navy, almost bridged over the Channel. But the introduction of musketry which will kill at five or eight hundred yards, must surely

make the landing of troops in the face of any opposition, nearly impossible. And thus we not unreasonably hope, that so long as a considerable force of riflemen shall be kept in a state of efficiency, an actual invasion of our coasts by a hostile force will be a thing not to be apprehended.

As to other hostilities than those which are defensive, it is a fact which is worthy of remark, that both now, and for two centuries past, England has never armed for purposes of ambition. The victories of Marlborough and of Wellington were all gained in defensive warfare. Louis XIV., and Napoleon I., both aspired to be the autocrats of Europe. Louis would have conquered Holland, invaded Ireland, and humiliated, if not destroyed Protestantism, had not a great general been given to England for the counteraction of all his plans. Napoleon, could he have found means to cross the Channel, would have thrown upon the English coast, the four hundred and fifty thousand men whom he carried over the Vistula. But once more a consummate commander was raised up, who first freed the Peninsula, and then defeated Napoleon himself, and marched into Paris as its conqueror. At the present moment we perceive no successor of Louis XIV., or of Napoleon I.; but we see a great and energetic military power on the opposite coast, and we know that steam has practically bridged over the Channel. Hence, to feel safe, and at ease, England, which seldom keeps forty thousand men under arms on her own territory, must provide herself with some further defensive force. The spontaneous motion of her people has created such a force in a wonderfully short space of time. A volunteer army of one hundred and thirty thou-

sand or one hundred and forty thousand men, capable of being doubled in three months if any real danger should show itself, gives to the Government a tranquil confidence. It can now speak to any foreign power, without jealousy, without enmity, *and without fear*. And thus the probabilities of quarrel are vastly diminished: for it is usually a realm which is both rich and ill-defended, which offers the strongest temptations to the invader. What carried the Goths to Rome, or the Spaniards to Mexico, but the knowledge that while there was gold, there was also a lack of arms to defend it?

The volunteers of England, then, are at the present moment, under Divine Providence, one chief element of her safety and her quiet rest. They offer themselves, freely and without reward, to guard their native land. Like the English archers of ancient days, they train themselves *at home*, on the moors and commons which surround their dwellings. When they become universally expert in the use of arms, they will be, like our ancient bowmen, fearless of an encounter with any European force. Without much presumption, they may hope to equal the fifteen thousand British infantry who maintained their country's cause at Waterloo. More than half of these were raw troops,—drafts from the militia,—soldiers who had never before seen the face of an enemy. Yet even these young soldiers excited the admiration of the greatest generals in Europe. Marshal Blucher, in describing the battle, says, "The English army fought with a valour which it would be impossible to surpass." The Austrian account says, "No infantry less practised and less cool than the English could have resisted such attacks." The Russian report says, "The squares of infantry remained *immoveable*, and repulsed

every attack." But the most signal testimony given to their firmness is that of Napoleon himself. In his last publication, written at St. Helena to excuse his defeat at Waterloo, he closes the whole story with these remarkable words:—

"In other times, the French would have gained the victory;—which, indeed, the OBSTINATE and UNYIELDING BRAVERY of the English troops *alone* prevented them from obtaining."

APPENDIX.

Most of the accounts of the battle of Waterloo conclude by giving tables of the troops engaged on either side. We therefore shall do the same; but our account will differ considerably from most of those which are current.

We shall give the force of the French army wholly from French testimony, and that of the highest class. But we shall not adopt, credulously, the "cooked account" fabricated by Napoleon at St. Helena, five years after the battle, in a work especially intended to retrieve, if possible, his lost "glory." We prefer to accept independent testimony, given without any such object, by French officers who must have been cognizant of the facts; the more confidently since it agrees with Napoleon's own account written at the time.

The estimate of the British force we take from the authorized and unquestioned returns; but we deduct at the foot those regiments which could not be prevailed on to remain in the line. A regiment which actually retreated, or ran away, on the approach of the French, cannot reasonably be set down as constituting a part of the "effective strength" of the duke's army. The brigades or regiments which we have named, stand upon record as having flinched from the fight; and the list of killed and wounded confirms the fact. The Cumberland Hanoverian Hussars, out of four hundred and ninety-seven men, lost but forty-seven, and D'Aubreme's Belgian division, out of three thousand five hundred and eighty-one, lost but two hundred and seventy-four. These casualties were evidently from cannon-shot, reaching them even in the rear. On the other hand, the 2nd *English* cavalry-brigade, out of eleven hundred and eighty-one men, lost five hundred and twenty-five!

I.

Effective Strength of the French Army at Waterloo.

Infantry of the Line:—		
First Corps	32 battalions	
Second Corps (3 divisions.) ..	28 battalions*	
Sixth Corps (2 divisions.) ..	12 battalions	
	72 battalions.	
Which, at 720 each, (according to the statements in the *Moniteur* and in the portfolio of Napoleon,) would amount to		51,840
Infantry of the Guard, stated by Gourgaud, p. 37, and Fleury, p. 167, at		14,000
Cavalry of the Guard, according to Fleury, pp. 155 and 167		4,500
Cavalry of 1st, 2nd, and 6th Corps, according to Fleury, p. 167 and Book ix.		4,200
Reserve of Cavalry, 4 Corps, according to Book ix, p. 128		7,400
Artillery ditto		6,500
		88,440
Losses sustained on the 16th, by these Corps, according to Book ix.		4,250
		84,190

* Book ix. tells us, in Table F, that four of the regiments in this corps had three battalions.

II.

Effective Strength of the Anglo-Allied Army at Waterloo.

British Infantry		15,181
„ Cavalry		5,843
„ Artillery		2,967
King's German Legion—Infantry		3,301
„ „ Cavalry		1,997
„ „ Artillery		526
Total British and German Legion ..		29,815
Hanoverian, Brunswick,		
„ and Nassau Infantry		17,724
„ „ Cavalry		1,363
„ „ Artillery		975
Dutch-Belgian Infantry		13,402
„ „ Cavalry		3,205
„ „ Artillery		1,177
Total		67,661
Deduct: Retreated—		
Bylandt's Belgian Brigade	3,233	
Tripp's Dutch-Belgian Carabiniers ..	1,237	
Hanoverian Cumberland Hussars ..	497	
D'Aubreme's Dutch-Belgian Brigade	3,181	8,148*
Actual Combatants ..		59,513

* There was probably the same backwardness in a few other cases; but *these* are distinctly recorded.

The estimate of the French strength, if it errs in excess, by supposing *all* the battalions to be of the strength of 720 men, errs also, unquestionably, in deficiency, in taking several of the items as set down in Book ix.—whereas, there is no doubt that all are, in that account, systematically diminished.

But the general result agrees singularly well with the duke's own private view, as given to a friend, and printed from the notes taken by that friend in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. xcii.

The friend in question (probably Lord Ellesmere) had enjoyed the advantage of free conversation with the duke, on the various events of his life, and afterwards noted down the chief facts which he thus elicited. Speaking of the disparity of force against which he had to contend in several of his battles, the duke said—

"At Waterloo the proportion was still more against me: I had less than sixty thousand, perhaps about fifty-six or fifty-eight thousand. Buonaparte had near eighty thousand."

Now the duke was eminently a lover of truth; never boastful or vain-glorious. The preceding page has shown how accurate he was as to his own force. Doubtless, he did not reckon as part of his available strength, troops which actually ran away, or retreated out of the line. Allowing for these deductions, his account is strictly accurate. The Russian Commissioner, General Pozzo di Borgo, writing from the field, said—

"The army of Wellington did not exceed fifty thousand men, *actually engaged.* The enemy was far superior, especially in cavalry."

As to Napoleon's force, the duke, with his usual caution and love of truth, would rather underrate than overrate it. Remembering this, let us place his statement by the side of Napoleon's own, written three days after the battle.

The duke says, "Buonaparte had nearly eighty thousand."

Napoleon himself, in his *Bulletin*, written and published at Paris three days after the battle, first adds fifteen thousand Prussians to the British army, and then says—

"The enemy's force, then, was *upwards* of ninety thousand men; ours, *less numerous.*"

Taking, then, these two accounts together, and remembering the duke's habitual caution and dislike to exaggeration; and remembering also that Napoleon had every possible motive for underrating his own strength,—is it possible to doubt that the French army was between eighty and ninety thousand men, and probably nearest to the larger nnmber?

Further corroborations may be found in the following statements:

I.

Captain Siborne, in vol. i., p. 434, gives the following document:—

"Strength of the French army, according to information received at the Prussian Head-quarters, shortly before the commencement of hostilities:—

1st Corps, at Lille	22,000
2nd Corps, at Valenciennes	24,000
3rd Corps, at Mezières	18,000
4th Corps, at Thionville	16,000
6th Corps, at Laor	14,000
Imperial Guard	21,000
Reserve Cavalry	15,000
	130,000

If the artillery are added, the aggregate will be raised to one hundred and forty thousand. And the strength of each corps was then increasing daily.

II.

The Austrian official account opens with this statement:—

"All the disposable troops between the North Sea and the Macse were collected into five army-corps; consisting of one hundred and fifty thousand men, of whom twenty-five thousand were cavalry.

III.

The principal French account of the battle, published in Paris in 1815, "by an Eye-witness," and never contradicted as to its main facts, says—

"The whole army might be estimated at one hundred and fifty thousand effective men, of whom twenty thousand were cavalry."

The general result of all this testimony may be thus summed up:—

The whole French army might be estimated in general terms, to amount to one hundred and fifty thousand men; but doubtless it only approximated to this number.

Reckoning its losses on the 16th at fifteen thousand men, it would have one hundred and thirty-five thousand men, or something approaching to that number on the 17th.

Estimating the corps detached under Grouchy to have been about forty thousand strong, there would remain above ninety thousand to be drawn up in line at Waterloo. But if we suppose the aggregate of the army, on the 15th, to have been something *less* than the nominal total of one hundred and fifty-thousand, then the force actually left with Napoleon, on the heights in front of Waterloo, would be a little below ninety thousand or ninety-five thousand. The duke, in his caution, says, "Buonaparte had nearly eighty thousand." We may safely believe the total to have been rather above than below eighty thousand. Probably, the fact would be, about eighty-six thousand or eighty-eight thousand.

Finally, the duke's own statement is, that Napoleon's force exceeded that under his command by more than twenty thousand men. And this is a conclusion to which all writers, except Napoleon himself, and those who have followed him, have felt obliged to come. The two armies were, practically, the one a little beyond eighty thousand, the other, rather below sixty thousand, of actual combatants.

THE END.

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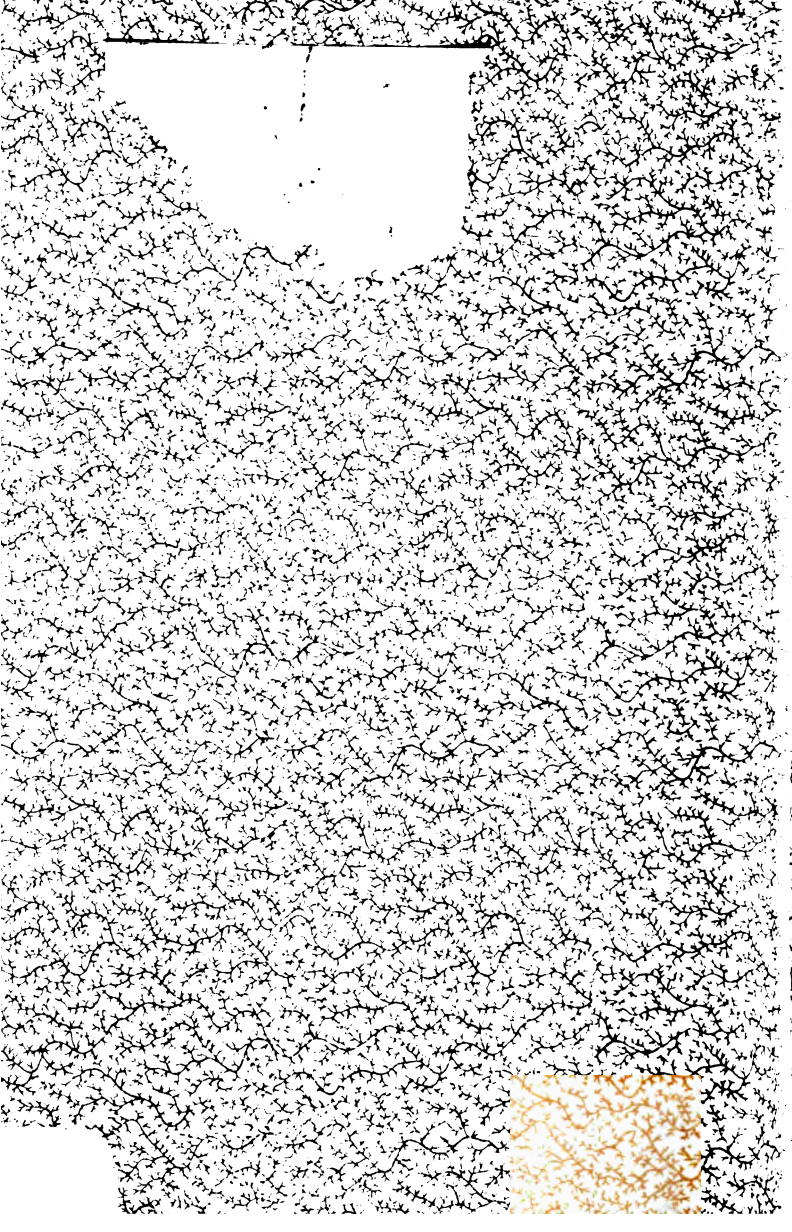

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